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THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

BY THE LATE

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE

REV. F. J. CHAVASSE, M.A.

PRINCIPAL OF WYCLIFFE HALL, OXFORD.

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INTRODUCTION

NEARLY half a century has passed since the first edition of this Book was given to the world. It appeared at a critical moment. A spirit of apprehension and unsettlement was abroad. The Church of England was staggering under the large secession to Rome which for a time checked and discredited the Tractarian movement. Six years before, John Henry Newman had gone over. Manning had just followed his example. Both had been senior contemporaries of Mr Litton in the Oriel Common Room. The Book was thought out in the thick of the conflict, amidst the din and distraction of controversy. Its very pages smell of the battle. It represents the early convictions of a singularly acute and powerful mind deeply impressed with the events taking place around him, and anxious to vindicate what he believed to be the true position of the English Church.

Mr. Litton was peculiarly well qualified to act as the spokesman of the Evangelical School. In University distinction he had few superiors. He was a double first class man, and had been a Fellow of Oriel. He was well acquainted with the leaders on both sides. He was

calm and dispassionate. As a College Tutor and a Parish Clergyman he had seen two very different sides of Church life. He had not rushed into print. He had read widely, and thought deeply and long before he put pen to paper. Instinctively he had fastened on the topic of the Church, as, to use his own words, "the epitome of the whole Roman controversy," and with rare independence and force he restated the theory of the Church which the Reformation had reaffirmed.

And if the Book represents Mr. Litton's early views on a weighty and difficult subject, it also expresses his latest convictions. After the lapse of forty-six years, in a green old age in which little of his intellectual force had abated, he took the work again in hand, and carefully revised it page by page.[1] The last proof-sheets had scarcely gone back to the printer when his home-call came, and he entered into rest. What he wrote as a comparatively young man in the midst of events which might easily have affected the judgment of a less well balanced and powerful mind, he emphatically reaffirmed as an old man standing apart from the battle and on the brink of the unseen world. It is the last legacy to the Church of one who, though in later years little known, had once shared in a memorable contest and done good service for what he believed to be the Truth.

[1] Parts of it he entirely recast to meet some of the altered features of the controversy.

The republication of the Book is peculiarly timely. It is as much needed now as it was fifty years ago. Men are still asking, "What is the Church?" Here they will find an old answer freshly and clearly stated. Here they will find principles laid down which all will do well to lay to heart. The author pleads for and displays absolute fairness in describing the system of an opponent. He refuses to deny to Rome the name of Christian, and acknowledges her merits as well as points out her errors and defects. He insists on the necessity of teaching positive truth, and emphasises the futility of mere negations. Exaggerated statements and appeals to popular feeling find no favour with him. Above all, he reasserts and applies the great principle which lay at the very heart of the Reformation, and is the sheet-anchor of the English Church, that, however highly we may regard the opinions of a Cyprian or an Augustine, it is to the original Sacred Writings of Christianity, to the words of inspired and Apostolic men, that we must appeal even on such a subject as the doctrine of the Church. If we follow his lead, the position is impregnable.

F. J. CHAVASSE.

WYCLIFFE HALL, OXFORD,
Sept. 11, 1897.

PREFACE

THE following pages contain, not exactly a new edition, but a re-issue of a work by the author on the Church of Christ, which has long been out of print. Some friends, whose judgment deservedly carries weight, proposed to him that, while embodying the substance of the former work, he should endeavour to present it in a form more acceptable to general readers; omitting some parts, abridging others, supplying deficiencies, and to some extent altering the arrangement. Such has been the author's aim, however the execution may answer to it. The subject has lost none of its interest and importance. The nature and constitution of the Christian Church were the main points at issue in the original Oxford movement, and no one conversant with the writings of its modern representatives can fail to see that the same issues lie at the root of the theories on the Incarnation, the Sacraments, and the Christian ministry, which seem at present prevalent in our Church. Between Romanists and Protestants the controversy has always been a primary one; it will be

so as long as these different schools of theology endure. The transformation of Christianity into a spiritualised Judaism is of ancient date—has been matter of debate through the long and eventful history of the Church—and has reappeared amongst ourselves as conspicuously as if the Epistle to the Hebrews had never been written.

The general character of the writer's work on the Church has been retained. It was intended not so much to deal with the visible developments of Romanism, as they appear in Roman Catholic countries, and, in a lesser degree, in Protestant, as to trace this practical system to the doctrines on which it is founded—doctrines which, though not ecclesiastically formulated before the Council of Trent, were prevalent from an early period in the post-Apostolic Church, and in the scholastic theology received a scientific treatment. From the latter they passed into the decisions of Trent. By our later divines this branch of study has from various causes, the chief of which is the change which passed over our Church since the time of Laud, been too much neglected, to the detriment of Protestant and, as we believe, scriptural Christianity. In proof we may refer to what has been recently maintained in influential quarters, that, if only some unfounded claims of supremacy were abandoned, and

some offensive excrescences in doctrine and ritual removed, the other doctrinal differences between us and Rome might easily be adjusted, and the way prepared for a reunion satisfactory to both sides. It may be true that the passage of the *Via media* theology to that of Rome would be thereby facilitated; but the supposition, beyond doubt, implies that the distinctive dogmatical statements of our Thirty-nine Articles are of subordinate moment, and may be modified or ignored without injury to the character of our Church. But if these statements are to remain, the attempt will be found to be a vain one. For dogma, after all, is the parent of everything else in the Church. Dogma, from being the business of the schools and theologians, works its way gradually but surely to a lower level, and at length in practice produces its natural fruit. The outward observances are dogma clothed with an appropriate investiture, appealing to the senses more than to the understanding; and again, by a reciprocal action, the observances prepare the minds of the uninstructed to receive the doctrines that lie behind. Thus dogma begets ritual, and ritual ministers to dogma. Hence, with the more astute defenders of the Romish and kindred systems, a ritual symbolising alleged facts is first employed to initiate the intended proselyte;

instruction follows afterwards. But, whatever practical reforms may be, from time to time, introduced (and the Council of Trent made very sweeping ones), no safeguard exists against a revival of the worst abuses while the roots whence they sprang remain in the ground: the special tenets of a Christian community make it what it is, nor do they ever lose their vitality. To arrive at some understanding of the ultimate doctrinal differences between Romanism and Protestantism on the subject of the Church, is the special object which the author has proposed to himself in the present work; to arrive, in short, at the seat of the disease, instead of dealing with its visible manifestations.

E. A. L.

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THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

CONTROVERTED questions of theology, as of other branches of science, can hardly be satisfactorily discussed without some previous notice of the sources of evidence to which the contending parties respectively appeal. In matters of physical science, ascertained facts are the premisses from which a debate proceeds; interpretations of these facts may differ, but until the latter are admitted, either wholly or partially, questions of interpretation cannot arise. Natural religion appeals to the constitution and course of Nature, as it presents itself to our view, for confirmation of the truths it teaches. But a special revelation from Heaven, as Christianity claims to be, containing facts and doctrines which unaided reason could never have discovered, must rely on supernatural credentials, such as miracles wrought by the Founder and His agents, and, where these latter have passed away, documentary evidence, supernaturally preserved from error, of what they did and what they taught.

Such evidence exists, and to it all Christians defer, although not all to it alone, as a decisive authority in matters of faith and morals. For although the Romanist associates tradition (whatever may be meant by that ambiguous term) with Scripture as a component part of the rule of faith, he holds equally with the Protestant the inspiration and Divine authority of Scripture. This is a great point gained. His so-called tradition may practically supersede the written Word, as it did in the case of the Scribes and Pharisees; but as long as he neither rejects nor falsifies the sacred text as it has come down to us, he stands in a very different position from that of the ancient heretics, who did one or the other, or both. It is true that he extends the limits of the canon beyond what the Protestant Churches admit,[1] but the additions are not of vital importance.

This recognition of Scripture as an authoritative record of Apostolical Christianity by all Christian Churches is the one encouraging fact—far more so than sameness of polity or alleged apostolical succession—which warrants a hope that at some future time the reunion of Western Christendom may be accomplished. At present, however, this is but a hope. For so pregnant with danger does our Church, in common with all the Reformed Churches, consider this coupling of tradition with the written Word as of equal authority—so likely to issue in the same results as it did in the Jewish Church, that one of our

[1] By including the Apocryphal Books.

Thirty-Nine Articles is specially devoted to the subject: 'Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein nor may be proved thereby is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.'[1]

The statements of the Council of Trent are very different: 'This holy Synod receives and honours all the books, as well of the Old Testament as of the New, since God is the Author of both; also with equal veneration the traditions handed down either orally by Christ, or dictated by the Holy Spirit and preserved by a continual succession in the Catholic Church.'[2]

The difference here indicated is far more serious than any that relates to particular doctrines; it is a difference as to the authoritative source of all Christian doctrine; and hence, as long as it stands, it bars the way to any projects of reconciliation. For if the Protestant urges that a certain doctrine is inconsistent with both the letter and the spirit of Scripture, he is reminded by his opponent that Scripture alone is not the rule of faith, and that what is confessedly not to be found in Scripture may nevertheless be found in the secondary but co-ordinate deposit of tradition.

The sufficiency of Scripture, which is the subject of the Article, is twofold—it is sufficiently full as to its contents, and sufficiently clear to convey its

[1] Article vi. [2] Session iv.

meaning, on all points essential to salvation, to candid and favourably disposed inquirers.

1. Scripture, that is, the Canon as we have it, contains everything that is necessary for us to know in order to be saved. The expressions 'necessary to salvation' or 'articles of faith' are emphatic. For the Article does not mean that nothing but what is commanded, or at any rate sanctioned, in the Christian Scriptures may find a place in such matters as the polity, or the ritual, or the regulations of the Church; always, of course, provided that they are not inconsistent with the spirit of Apostolical Christianity 'It is not necessary that traditions and ceremonies be in all places one or utterly like; for in all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained contrary to God's Word.'[1] The traditions and ceremonies here meant relate to things indifferent, and such as do not affect salvation; they are 'ordained only by man's authority,' and by the same authority may be 'changed and abolished;' and of such observances those only are to be retained which do not imply anything 'repugnant to the Word of God.' This last limitation is necessary, because ceremonies may be introduced which are intended to, and do, prepare the way for doctrines which form no part of Apostolical Christianity. But so long as this is guarded against, the Church is not prohibited from introducing into her practical system things not

[1] Article xxxiv.

indeed unscriptural, but on which Scripture is silent, as, *e.g.*, infant baptism or diocesan episcopacy. Such things may not be capable of scriptural proof, and yet be retained as not at variance with apostolical doctrine or precedent, and as left, more or less, to the discretion of the Church.

The error of the old Puritans, against whom Hooker contended, consisted in forgetting that Christianity is not a ceremonial law, but a religion of spirit and of truth, and that 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.'[1] Christianity is intended for all races of men, all states of society, all countries and climates; and so long as it *is* Christianity, neither more nor less, the authentic record abstains from details which belong to a more immature stage of religion. Indeed, the omissions of the New Testament are very instructive, and furnish an indirect but strong evidence of its inspiration. Its silence, with one exception, on the events of our Lord's life before His public appearance, is an example in point. Uninspired writers would probably have filled up the gap with legendary tales of precocity and supernatural power, such as appear in some biographies of remarkable persons; the four Evangelists contain nothing of the kind.

As regards the Church, the prospective allusions to it in the Gospels, the history of its founding in the Book of Acts, and the Epistles addressed to local Christian societies, are similarly distinguished by a reticence on many points on which we might be tempted to wish for further information. To the eye of Omniscience the

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 17.

controversies on which the Church has been for ages divided and distracted must have been foreknown; such, *e.g.*, as those on election, on the relation of effectual grace to free-will, on the divinely-intended polity of the Church, on the proper subjects of baptism, and others that might be mentioned; and to our limited faculties it might have seemed desirable that these disputes should have been avoided by more explicit information. How often do we wish that we could interrogate St. Paul on the meaning of some of his statements! It has not, however, pleased the great Head of the Church (and doubtless for the wisest purposes) to gratify such wishes; and the controversies go on. But in what is essential to salvation, if the final revelation of God did not vouchsafe ample instruction, it would fail of its main object. 'The Church,' we read again, 'has authority in controversies of faith,'[1] for the Holy Spirit dwells in the whole body as well as in each member of it, and what the whole body unites in believing comes to each member with preponderating weight, and has an *à priori* claim to his acceptance; yet even in general Councils the voice of the Church 'may err, and sometimes has erred, in things pertaining to God,' and therefore its decisions 'have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture.'[2] Words cannot more clearly express the mind of our Church that Scripture is not only the touchstone of doctrine, but is, as regards its contents, fully sufficient for the purposes for which it was given. But is our

[1] Article xx. [2] Article xxi.

Church justified in this assumption? The following remarks are offered on this point.

The Church was founded by the living ministry of the Apostles, and existed before any of the books of the New Testament were written—this cannot be denied. These accredited messengers of their Master went everywhere preaching the Word. They announced that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah, that He was crucified for our sins, rose the third day, and will come again to judge the quick and the dead. They refer to the Day of Pentecost and its events as the fulfilment of His promise to come to them even now in another form,[1] and of the prophetic intimations of the Old Testament touching the mission of the Holy Ghost. They remitted and retained sins; they laid the foundations of the Church; they presided with undisputed authority over the affairs of the infant society. They appointed or sanctioned its first ministers and defined their offices. Where the Holy Spirit accompanied the Word spoken, faith struck root in the hearts of the hearers, and by baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity they were visibly incorporated into the Church. Thus the Lord daily increased the number of believers, those who through repentance and faith were in a 'state of salvation.'[2]

[1] John xiv. 18.

[2] The Revised Version properly omits the words 'to the Church,' which rest on no good authority. The Lord increased the number of believers, who by their faith were among the saved. Doubtless these were baptized, and thus incorporated in the local Christian society, and, moreover, thus brought into communion with Christians everywhere.

And, further, the Apostles, in obedience to our Lord's command, proceeded to teach their converts, to instruct them in the mysteries of their new religion, to solve questions of casuistry, to correct mistakes, and especially to establish the connection of Christianity with the Old Testament, the Jewish ceremonial law, and the writings of the Prophets. In their public addresses, as they are recorded in the Book of Acts, particularly at the first founding of a Church, little appears but what was afterwards embodied in the so-called Apostles' Creed. Here was an apostolical tradition of the authenticity of which there could be no doubt; and if it had been appointed that there should have been a succession of apostles, inspired depositaries of the faith to the end of time, it is conceivable that that faith might have been preserved by oral transmission, and that the Church might not have needed, as it did not at first, written evidence of what genuine Apostolical Christianity is. For the question is not about the *mode* of conveyance, whether it be oral or written, but whether the tradition is undoubtedly apostolic. This oral teaching of the Apostles, in the first age, was 'the form of sound words' which Timothy was directed to hold fast;[1] these were the 'traditions' (παραδόσεις) which the Corinthians were commended for keeping in mind, and the Thessalonians exhorted to uphold.[2] And even after the departure of the Apostles such traditions might have been, for a time, preserved in their purity by the immediate hearers

[1] 2 Tim. i. 13, iii. 14. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 2; 2 Thess. ii. 15.

and confidential associates of the Apostles, such as Timothy, Titus, Silas, and others of the same class. But this advantage did not last long. Not only were the Apostles, like their Master, to leave the world as soon as their appointed work was done; they were to have no successors as inspired founders of the Church, and those who had been in close intimacy with them, one after another, erelong followed them. The Church would now have been dependent on *uninspired* oral tradition if no provision had been made to supply the place of the Apostles. And who that knows how, in secular history, oral tradition, without written guarantee for its accuracy, becomes in a comparatively short time the most untrustworthy of guides, could contemplate a similar prospect as regards the Gospel without disquietude? It may be urged that the Church, as the temple of the Holy Ghost, to which special promises are vouchsafed, is in a different position from secular institutions, and to a certain extent the remark is true.[1] But the ordinary indwelling of the Holy Ghost in Christians, or in the collective body, is by no means the same, either as regards extent or energy, as that which it was the privilege of the Apostles, as such, to enjoy.

Bereft of this infallible guidance, and even of the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, which did not

[1] To a certain extent; for such promises as Matt. xvi. 18, John xvi. 13, are irrelevant to the point at issue. The former simply guarantees that there shall always be a true Church in the world; the latter, that the Apostles (not their successors) should be guided into the whole truth. The punctuation of 1 Tim. iii. 15 is too doubtful to found any reasoning upon it.

long survive the removal of the Apostles, the Church would have had to contend, without the full panoply of Divine armour, against the hostile influences of a corrupt nature within, in process of renewal indeed, but not wholly renewed, and of a world without, to the Jewish portion of which the Gospel was a stumbling-block and to the heathen foolishness. What wonder if uninspired tradition should succumb in the conflict, and though, under Divine Providence, it might still enshrine the fundamental Articles of the Christian faith, so add to or disfigure the fair form of Apostolic Christianity as to make it man's Christianity, and not God's? This is no mere matter of surmise; history confirms the conclusion. During the many centuries in which traditions of human origin, but professing to be apostolic, reigned in the Church, while practically the Bible was unknown, or known but to a few, and especially even now in the Romish communion, where the sacred volume is a closed book, except under strict limitations, to the laity, the Gospel of Christ assumes a character which, if the Apostles, revisiting the earth again, were to inspect, they would one and all exclaim, 'This is *not* the tradition which we delivered orally to the Churches which we founded.'

The danger was imminent, as the Apostolic College gradually disappeared; but the Divine Head of the Church, from whom the future is never hidden, made provision for its being met, as far as was consistent with human freedom. In the later part of the Apostolic age, instead of visiting the Churches personally, which

had become difficult, and in some cases impossible, the leading Apostles, St. John, St. Peter, St. James, and especially St. Paul, and others who were not Apostles, but had lived in close communication with some of the Apostles, were moved by the Holy Spirit to commit to writing, either in the form of narrative or epistles, the leading facts of the life of Christ, the history of the first age of the Church, and the further developments of Christian doctrine which they had orally delivered to their converts, but which they now, with some additions, committed to the imperishable custody of their writings. The universal diffusion of the Greek language, and the facilities of intercourse which prevailed in the Roman Empire at the time, rendered such modes of communication comparatively easy. Apostolic letters were read and treasured up by the Churches to which they were addressed; they were then passed on to other Churches,[1] who compared them with their own, and by the gift of spiritual discernment[2] recognised in them the mind of Christ. Spurious epistles[3] and spurious gospels were thus eliminated, and finally a *selection*[4] out of the mass was formed, we know not when or by whom, but doubtless under the guiding impulse of the Holy Spirit, which substantially agrees with our present canon. Thus the transition from dependence on oral teaching to dependence on writing was gradual; writing proved

[1] Col. iv. 16; 1 Thess. v. 27. [2] 1 Cor. xii. 10. [3] 2 Thess. ii. 2.

[4] A selection; for surely it is difficult to suppose that St. Paul wrote no other epistles than the few which we possess. Certainly one epistle mentioned by him seems to have been lost, that to the Laodiceans, Col. iv. 16.

itself on writing, historical evidence went hand in hand with internal, and the canon grew up into acknowledgment, not by any formal decision of councils, but as the testimony of the Church universal to what it believed to be inspired writings. Can we suppose that all this could have happened without a special Providence intervening, and intervening for a special end?—that, for example, the detention of St. Paul at Rome for two years, to which we owe the Epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon, was a mere accident in his career, and not rather a designed appointment in view of an impending change? Thus, at any rate, the Church was prepared and compensated for the loss of its inspired teachers, and fully compensated. For in the volume of the Christian Scriptures the Apostles still speak to us; they still discharge their office; still, as was promised to them, 'sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel,'[1] the only real Apostolate which the Church now possesses.

And now to the question before us. Can we suppose that this most precious gift of Christ to His Church, thus expressly designed to supply the Apostles' place, so providentially preserved from serious mutilation or corruption, is, after all, imperfect as a revelation, and needs to be supplemented by human traditions, supposed to be communicated by the Apostles to a select few as a system of esoteric instruction, and handed down from age to age pretty much after the fashion of the Eleusinian mysteries? If ever such a

[1] Matt. xix. 28.

secret code did exist, containing more than the written Word, or at variance with it, nobody can now with certainty produce a syllable thereof; and alleged traditions of this kind must be tested before they are accepted, by their agreement with what we know to be true Apostolical teaching, that of the written Word. Could the latter discharge this office of testing if it did not fully contain the materials for it? Timothy was reminded by St. Paul that even the Scriptures of the Old Testament were able to make him wise unto salvation,[1] and yet Timothy did not possess, as we do, both the cipher and the key to it. The Church, therefore, even before the New Testament Scriptures were written, was never left wholly without a written Word; no interregnum of mere oral tradition ever occurred; that written Word confessedly contained but a shadow or prophecies of good things to come; and yet all that was essential to salvation could be collected from it.

The Apostles authenticate the Jewish Scriptures as belonging also to the Christian Church, and a great part of our Lord's and of the Apostles' teaching consisted in pointing out the connection. To the doubting disciples, on the road to Emmaus, the risen Saviour, 'beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself;'[2] and if so, they must have been there. And shall the completed revelation of God in the New Testament be deemed insufficient for salvation? Far be the thought from us. 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 15. [2] Luke xxiv. 27.

and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.'[1] It would not be profitable for these purposes if additions to it of equal authority were needed, especially in matters which concern salvation. Holy Scripture contains many things which are not necessary to salvation, but all that are it does contain; and this is all that we have at present to do with. We may confidently make St. Paul's words to the Ephesian elders our own: 'I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.'[2]

2. But even if it be granted that Holy Scripture was intended to, and does actually, contain all necessary truth, does it not need an interpreter? The record may be ample, but if it is written in a language which we do not understand, or with so many possible meanings that it has no definite one, or, generally, is of such an abstruse character that plain minds can make nothing of it, we may still be without a sufficient touchstone of Apostolical doctrine and a sufficient guide in morals.

Our Article meets this question when it declares that 'whatsoever is not read therein nor may be proved thereby' is not to be imposed as an article of faith. Here surely is implied that Scripture may, at least as regards the essentials of the faith, be read so as to be understood; and further, that proofs may without difficulty be drawn from its statements.

It is hardly to be supposed that a collection of

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 16. [2] Acts xx. 32.

writings, divinely inspired, and intended, if not to supersede uninspired oral teaching, yet to test, and if need be correct it, should itself be unintelligible. The writings, too, of the New Testament were addressed, not exclusively to schools of philosophers or to a priestly caste, to be hidden from the public eye, but to whole Churches, comprising men of every degree of culture and ability. They were to be read, and were read, in the public assemblies of Christians; and if so, it must have been presumed by the writers that they were not unfitted for that purpose. They consist, with the exception of the Apocalypse, either of simple narratives, or familiar epistles addressed by spiritual fathers to their children in the faith. To interdict the reading of the Bible to the laity is to forget that it is a revelation of God's counsels to the whole world, and betrays a secret consciousness on the part of the Church that so acts that its doctrines or practical system will not bear comparison with the written Word. If it be objected that the languages in which it was originally written are now to the mass of Christians dead ones, we answer that the numerous versions which soon appeared, and in modern times have been so abundantly multiplied, almost supply the place of the Pentecostal miracles, and render it possible for the greater part of mankind, nation or tribe, to hear in their own tongues the wonderful works of God.[1] If doubt still be entertained whether these versions truly represent the original,

[1] Acts ii. 11.

the simple layman may satisfy himself by observing the substantial agreement which they exhibit with each other, just as the substantial agreement of the MSS. of Homer or any ancient classic convinces us that the text of these authors has been in the main preserved. The exceptions which are sometimes found, as in the Romish Latin versions, dictated by motives not connected with accuracy,[1] are trifling compared with the general coincidence. But does not the Bible contain obscurities which have not as yet been removed, and depths not as yet fathomed? Does not St. Peter speak of his brother Apostle's letters as containing 'some things hard to be understood'?[2] Undoubtedly this is so. Who can wonder if a communication from Heaven should be of this character? —that mysteries should be found in it which baffle human reason to comprehend? If it had none such, we might reasonably suspect its origin. But let it be observed that the obscurity is often in the subject-matter rather than in the expression. 'Baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;' 'the Word became flesh;' 'He bare our sins in His own body on the tree.' Both the words and the general meaning are clear enough, but the facts expressed by them—viz., the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, the Atonement—remain mysteries, and will do so to the end of time. 'We see through a glass darkly' as regards what may be called the theory

[1] For instance, in these versions the word Presbyter is usually rendered 'Sacerdos.'

[2] 2 Peter iii. 16

of these revealed facts, but they are revealed with all-sufficient clearness. Besides these fundamental verities, the New Testament contains many subordinate matters interesting to the Christian and stimulating inquiry—prophecies unfulfilled, hints not developed, principles not at the time of writing worked out into practice. Of this feature the question of slavery is an example. In the New Testament slavery is never openly prohibited; slaves are exhorted to be content with their lot unless they can honourably acquire their freedom, and to show all fidelity and good-will towards their masters; but the masters are never blamed for having slaves. 'What an omission!' the sceptical philosopher of our time or the Tridentine theologian may exclaim. Can the Bible be a complete code of morals? Yet St. Paul did, from the first, enunciate principles which slowly worked their way for centuries through the intervening mass of prejudice and cupidity, until at length the Christian world came to acknowledge, nominally at least, slavery to be a crime which ought to be prohibited. Nor has the Bible on such social questions by any means spoken its last word to the Church. As regards prophecy, has the Apocalypse as yet surrendered its treasures, or St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians (chap. ii.) its true meaning, to inquirers however devout and diligent? The Bible has its depths, which have not yet been fathomed, as well as its fordable waters; but these last contain all necessary articles of faith, and they *are* fordable even by the simple and unlearned.

The Article does not define *by whom* Scripture is to be read, &c.—'whatsoever is not read therein or may be proved thereby'—but was such a specification necessary? The Bible, be it remembered, is for the Church, not for the world; it is the precious gift of God to believers, those supposed to be already, through the preaching of the Word, in saving union with Christ. It is taken for granted that the same Holy Spirit who prompted the writers dwells in the readers of their writings, who therefore come to the perusal with qualifications very different from those of mere human learning, or ability, or official position. These latter may not always be found in combination with spiritual perception; and if the latter is wanting, Scripture may be read, but it will not be understood. It is the Church that derives spiritual nutriment from the written word,[1] and the Church, the body of which Christ is the Head, the blessed company of all faithful people, is not identical with the community of the baptized, or any visible communion, episcopal or other, or any Council, however general, or any infallible human authority; it consists of those who by the Holy Spirit have been convinced of sin, who accept Christ as a Saviour from sin, its guilt and its dominion, who follow Him and know His voice, who will reign with Him hereafter. These it is in each Christian society who read the Scriptures so as to perceive that they are the Word of God, and who without difficulty apprehend, in all essential points, what they teach. Thus it is not every man, professed Christian

[1] 1 Peter ii. 2.

or heathen, into whose hands the Bible may fall, that is to be the judge of what it contains, or distinguish between essentials and non-essentials. The reason is given by St. Paul: 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned; but he that is spiritual judgeth all things.'[1]

It is true that no individual member of the body acts in this matter independently of other means, and by an inward light which is not shared by others. By the living ministration of the Word each Christian was first brought to the knowledge of Christ; by the living ministration of the same Word he is carried on to more perfect knowledge; in the Christian society he finds others like-minded with himself, and realises the unity of the Spirit; his immature conceptions are amended by mutual communication, and while imparting his own spiritual gift, whatever it may be, he receives of the gifts which his fellow-Christians possess. In short, he discerns the mind of the Spirit in Scripture, not as an isolated individual, but as a member of a community surrounded with all the outward means which have been providentially supplied for his spiritual improvement. In the last resort, however, it is because he personally is a living stone in the spiritual temple[2] that the Scripture is no sealed volume to him; he has received the Spirit of God, and knows the things that are freely given to him of

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15.

[2] 1 Peter ii. 5.

God; and hence comes to the written Word with a mind prepared to extract the treasures which it contains—some, the more essential to the spiritual life, on the surface, others not so necessary, deeper down in the mine. The Holy Spirit in the heart strikes a chord of unison with the Holy Spirit in the Word.

But will not difficulties and obscurities still exercise the patience of the most devout student? They will, as long as we confine ourselves to one author, even should he be a St. Paul, the most voluminous of the New Testament writers. But the objection leaves out of view the structure of the inspired record. The Bible is not one book, the production of one author, but a collection of books by various authors, differing from each other in temperament, circumstances, early training, spiritual experience, spiritual gifts, powers of mind, though all sharing in the common gift of supernatural inspiration. 'The manifold wisdom of God'[1] in the Gospel has its representatives in the record. Christianity is a many-sided revelation, and demands many-sided interpreters, and the demand is met. And so the canon, or maxim, common to all the Protestant Churches, 'The Bible is its own authentic expositor,' rests on firm ground. 'We believe and profess,' says the first Helvetic Confession (*Expositio simplex*), 'that the Canonical Scriptures have sufficient authority from themselves and not from man: for God Himself spoke to the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, and still speaks to us in the writings of those who did write.

[1] Ephes. iii. 10.

And the whole Church of Christ possesses in Scripture all that appertains to saving faith and Christian life;' and, as regards the *interpretation* of Scripture, it continues: 'We do not admit any and every interpretation, especially not that which the Church of Rome would force upon us, but that only which is brought from *the Scriptures themselves*, due regard being had to the languages in which, and the circumstances under which, they were written; *the light thrown by clearer passages on the more obscure.*' Comparing Scripture with Scripture, St. Paul with St. James and both with St. John, marking wherein they agree and wherein they seem to disagree; allowing one writer to supplement another, or, as in the Epistle to the Hebrews, to treat formally a whole topic, which had not been so fully developed by the writer's fellow-labourers; we find that, under providence, Scripture contains within itself the materials of its own interpretation, and needs no other expositor, whether the Church or a visible head thereof, to enable us to decipher its meaning on all necessary points. What remains still insoluble, we may be sure is not essential.

The foregoing observations, it is obvious, preclude us, in examining any Article of the Creeds, especially the one with which we are at present concerned, 'I believe in the Holy Catholic Church,' from accepting any such arbiter of doctrine as Scripture and tradition (the doctrine of Rome), or Scripture interpreted by the early Fathers (the doctrine of Anglican or *via media* theology). We maintain that either is unnecessary,

and dishonouring to the Word of God. The former may be consigned to its proper authors to defend, but the latter deserves consideration. And the first question we ask is, where is this consentient interpretation of Scripture by the Fathers, let us say, of the first five centuries to be found? If it be replied, 'In the Creeds,' that may be true, but it is irrelevant to the point at present at issue. The Apostolical tradition—if by that term is meant merely the faith of the Church from the first on certain fundamental facts of revelation, such as the Incarnation, the Deity of Christ, the Holy Trinity, the forgiveness of sins—is received as Apostolical by the whole of Christendom, by Romanists, by the Eastern Church, by the foreign Protestant Churches, by ourselves; although we receive the three Creeds not as independent witnesses, but because they can be 'proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.'[1] Still, on whatever ground the Creeds and the tradition they represent are accepted, it is the common faith of Christendom which they declare, and therefore must be put out of view in the present controversy. Not that wherein the Churches agree, but that wherein they differ, is the matter in debate. Unless this rule is observed, we may waste time in pushing back the argument indefinitely.

Thus, in support of tradition as necessary to supplement Scripture, it is not unfrequently urged that Scripture does not assert its own inspiration, still less define its own Canon; and even the statement has been made

[1] Article viii.

that the doctrine of the Holy Trinity cannot, without the aid of the Church, be proved from it. It might as well be asked, in dealing with particular controversies, How do we prove that there is a God? Waiving the questions how far such statements are true, or from what motives they proceed, it is enough that we do believe in the inspiration of Scripture, and accept the canon and the doctrine of the Trinity; and the same may be said of the other Articles of the Creeds. What we are agreed on may be dismissed; it is what remains that is in dispute; and the controversy is not with heretics or heathens, but with Christians. Acknowledging that the Primitive Church in its Creeds and the Fathers in their writings were faithful to their trust as *witnesses* to what was universally held; and assigning due weight (authority in the proper sense of the word) to their testimony; and, in fact, inheritors with them of this Apostolic deposit which Providence has never suffered to disappear from the Church; we yet do not make them the rule of faith, either in whole or in part; not *norma credendi* but *norma crediti*; not as prescribing what we are to believe, but witnesses of what from the first has been believed. No hermeneutical authority over Scripture is here assumed, but rather submission to its authority. When, however, we pass from this common inheritance of the Churches to matters not mentioned in the Creeds—such as the number, nature, and spiritual effect of the Sacraments, the nature and instrument of justification, the meaning of regeneration—not the less important be-

cause not part of the Creeds, where can any unanimous and trustworthy interpretation of Scripture be found in the Fathers of the centuries above named? On these points Fathers can be cited against Fathers; one catena contradicts another; to say nothing of the exegetical disadvantages under which these pious men laboured; so that the reader bent on this method of arriving at the sense of Scripture soon abandons the task in despair. The confession of the most distinguished defender of his Church in modern times asserts nothing but the fact when he writes, 'We could hardly, with the exception of a very few classical passages, discover in them (the Fathers) any general agreement of interpretation beyond the fact that they all teach the same doctrine of faith and morals'[1]—the same doctrine of faith, that is, 'the analogy of faith,' as it is called, the fundamental truths of the Creeds; what makes a church a Christian Church though in some particulars it may teach what is at variance with Scripture. Moreover, if the meaning even of the Creeds, or still more of the Patristic interpretations, should be matter of debate, who is to decide on which side the truth lies? If even in the inspired writings human language is liable to misapprehension, how much more must this be the case in uninspired ones. Manifestly the Anglican theory here breaks down; and it must ever do so as long as the edifice is not com-

[1] Möhler, Symb. § 42. In truth, the prescription of the Council of Trent: 'Ut nemo contra unanimem consensum Patrum ipsam Scripturam S. interpretari audeat' (Sess. iv.), or any similar one, is incapable of fulfilment.

pleted by the assumption that a living infallible judge has been appointed to declare which of several meanings is the true one.

It may be observed, in passing, that Scripture cannot properly be called *judex controversiarum*. Scripture does not decide its own meaning; that is, when controversy arises it does not judicially settle it. No book can do so, for it cannot anticipate the variety of features which each fresh case must present. Our judges in courts of law are the expositors of the law, but the law cannot always expound its own meaning, or apply itself in particular; for this a living authority is needed. Now the Romanist argues that because it is needed in the Church it must exist; the Protestant, that because no such tribunal exists, we do not need it. And in fact this is so. An infallible human judge would be inconsistent with the spirit of the Christian dispensation, which presupposes personal conviction of Divine truth, and to it alone attaches value;[1] personal conviction freely arrived at, not indeed apart from a special Divine agency affecting the will and enlightening the understanding, but still operating through and in conjunction with the faculties implanted in us.[2] The Holy Spirit alone, the Divine Author of the Scriptures, knows their full meaning: 'The things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God'; 'for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God;'[3] and this power did not pass either to Prophets or Apostles,

[1] In adults; the case of children under instruction is different.
[2] Rom. viii. 16.
[3] 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.

much less to ordinary Christians, whatever their official position. Meanwhile, the Unity of the Spirit is, in substantial matters, preserved among all the members of the true, or, as Protestants call it, the invisible, Church, because they are 'all taught of God,'[1] and in their measure 'know the things that are freely given them of God.'[2]

The consent of the early Fathers, then, in the interpretation of Scripture does not (with the exception above mentioned) exist, and if it did, it would still not be the *regula fidei*; but it may be both interesting and instructive, by way of conclusion to this chapter, to mark the direction which the teaching of the Church, as represented by some of the most eminent of them, was at the time mentioned taking. It may be instructive as raising the question whether, under any circumstances, they can be regarded as safe expositors of Scripture; and it may be interesting to us, because statements occur, not in the Thirty-Nine Articles, but in some of our less authoritative formularies, and in the writings of some of our leading reformers, which may occasion regret that they were not more carefully guarded. Thus the Canon of 1571 directs 'preachers to be careful not to preach aught to be religiously held and believed, except what is agreeable to the doctrine of the Old or New Testament, and collected from that very doctrine by the Catholic Fathers and ancient bishops.' So Bishop Jewel, after enumerating some of the unscriptural doctrines and ritualistic observances of

[1] John vi. 45.

[2] 1 Cor. ii. 12.

the Romish Church, challenges his adversaries to prove them either from the Scriptures, 'or the old Fathers, or any old general Council, or the example of the Primitive Church;' and pledges himself, if they could do so, to pass over to their side. No doubt Scripture here retains its place as the primary source of Apostolic doctrine, and the other expressions admit of a fair interpretation; but advantage has been taken of the latter to recommend a rule of faith which certainly is not that of our Sixth Article. Jewel might well plead that the popular Romanism of the fourteenth century is not to be found in the Fifth; but did he sufficiently consider that although the system had not come to maturity in the time of the 'old doctors,' the germs of it are found in abundance in their writings?

The religious revolution of the sixteenth century in England proceeded on somewhat different lines from those which marked its rise abroad. Justification by faith, as distinguished from the Pelagian and Sacramental system, which had corrupted the Church to its core, was the mainspring of the Lutheran movement; with us the inherent sovereignty of nations led the way. Luther protested against the intervention of the Church between the believer and Christ; the English Reformers, in the first instance, against her usurpations over the State, and especially the alleged supremacy of the Pope. The former partook more of a religious, the latter more of a political character. This difference operated both advantageously and the reverse on

our position. The national character which the Reformation assumed in England favoured a retention of the ancient polity of the Church and of the ministerial succession; but it led some of our leading theologians to dwell more on an external connection with the past than on Apostolical doctrine. They professed that their main object was to restore the Church in England to what it was in the third or fourth centuries; and hence the temptation arose to couple the testimony of the ancient Fathers with that of Scripture, as if the two were in agreement.

It seemed a short and easy method with Rome to say, 'Prove from the remains of Christian antiquity, to which you appeal as we do, the doctrines of Masses for the living and the dead, of Purgatory with its accompaniments, or of the supremacy of the Pope, and you will have done much to convince us.' The method too seemed justified, for at that time Romish controversialists were wont to cite the Fathers in support of their tenets,[1] a proceeding which now would very justly be considered superfluous. But it was a dangerous line of argument. It shifted more or less the field of debate from Scripture to the alleged voice of Catholic antiquity. Patristic interpretations of Scripture, if acquiesced in, would virtually become Scripture. It should be matter of thankfulness that the principle in question was never formally incorporated in our Articles; for the assertion may be hazarded that hardly one of the distinctive doctrines of Romanism can be named

[1] See the Romish Catechism, *passim*.

the rudiment of which cannot be traced to that age of the Church which has been presented to us as our model both in doctrine and ritual.

In making a selection in proof, we may confine ourselves to great writers rather of the Western Church than of the Eastern. The dialectical spirit of the Greeks, in transferring itself from the speculations of heathen philosophy to Christian theology, found a congenial sphere of exercise in systematising the doctrines and composing apologetic defences of the Gospel; and satisfied with the laurels which they gained in these fields, they left the practical system of the Church and its government to be worked out by the less subtle but more energetic leaders of Western Christianity. How were the treasures of the Gospel to be actually made over to mankind? This was the problem which chiefly engaged the attention of the latter, and which they solved in their own way. And of all the Western Fathers to the end of the fifth century, Cyprian and Augustine—the one the greatest prelate, the other the greatest theologian of his time—may be named as having laid the foundations of Romanism.

At the risk of anticipating, in some measure, the subject of the following chapters, Cyprian's statements on the nature and constitution of the Church may be cited as remarkable. In the tract *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, he observes that 'there is but one Church' (he means one visible one), 'which is spread abroad far and wide. This Church diffuses its rays throughout the world; like the sun, it is the same luminary that is every-

where present, and the unity of the body is not divided. There is but one fountain, one origin, one mother fruitful in successful procreation. In her womb we are conceived, by her milk we are nourished, by her spirit we are quickened. The spouse of Christ' (this visible Church) 'cannot be defiled; she is incorrupt and chaste. She knows but one home, one holy bridal chamber. Whosoever is separated from the Church is united to a harlot, is cut off from the promises belonging to the Church. He cannot have God for his Father who has not the Church for his mother. He who gathers save in the Church scatters. He is an alien, a profane person, an enemy. He who holds not the unity of the Church holds not the law of God; holds not faith in the Father and in the Son; holds not life and salvation. This Sacrament of unity, this bond of an indissoluble union, was prefigured by the unrent garment of Christ. He, whoever he may be, who secedes from the maternal womb cannot breathe or live apart; he loses the semblance of salvation.'

Again,[1] 'It is clear that all who can be proved to have separated themselves from the unity and charity of the Catholic Church must be regarded as enemies of the Lord and antichrists. It is written, "If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."[2] When they (Novatian and his supporters) say in baptizing, "Dost thou believe in

[1] Epist. 76, ad Magn.

[2] This application of Matt. xviii. 17 to his subject may throw doubt on Cyprian's merits as an interpreter of Scripture. The passage refers not to separation from the Church, but to 'trespasses' on the part of

the remission of sins and eternal life through the holy Church?"[1] they speak falsely in their interrogation, inasmuch as they have not the Church amongst them.' To the same effect,[2] 'What an assertion to make, that there be sons of God who are not born in the Church! There is one God, one Christ, one Church, and one Chair, founded on the rock by the word of the Lord. No altar can be erected, no priesthood established, besides the one altar and the one priesthood.' It might have been thought that these strong statements were peculiar to Cyprian did we not possess, inserted in his works, an epistle from Firmilian, Bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, in which similar ones occur: 'If the spouse of Christ, the Catholic Church, is one, it is she who alone generates sons of God. You (Cyprian) have shown that the name of Christ can avail only in the Church, to which alone Christ has committed' (the power of conferring) 'heavenly grace.' If Augustine's writings present, in moderation of tone, a favourable contrast to those of the fervid Cyprian, it was not because his views were essentially different. In controversy with the Donatists he successfully vindicated the validity of baptism, by whomsoever administered, provided due matter and form were present, but he was fully possessed with the idea of the mystical body one Christian towards another; and 'the Church' here means not the one Catholic Church, but the local Christian society to which the offender belonged.

[1] This reading of the article in the Creed is to be noted. It must have been in Cyprian's time common in the African Church, and it is very significant.

[2] Epist. 74, ad Pomp., and 40, ad Pleb.

of Christ being a visible corporation, through which, as an appointed channel, and by means of sacraments, Christ dispenses saving grace; Christ in the background, the Church the proximate treasury. 'What does sound faith, or haply an unmutilated sacrament of faith, profit him, the integrity of whose charity is destroyed by the deadly wound of schism, the loss of which charity or love renders all else that he possesses unavailing to life eternal?'[1] 'Whereas our predecessors maintained that in the Catholic Church alone the Holy Spirit is, by the imposition of hands, given, their meaning was the same as that of the Apostle when he says, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given us;"[2] for that is the charity or love of which they are destitute who are severed from the communion of the Catholic Church; and on this account, even should they speak with the tongues of men or angels, understand all mysteries and all knowledge, possess faith so as to remove mountains, distribute all their goods to the poor, and give their bodies to be burned, it profiteth nothing.'[3] 'To salvation and life eternal no one can attain who is not in communion with His body, the Church.'[4] 'Within that threshing-floor' (the Church) 'there may be both good and bad; outside it there cannot be good.'[5]

[1] De Bapt. cont. Don., i. s. 11.

[2] This misinterpretation of the Apostle's words (Rom. v. 5) is of ancient date. The context shows that, not our love to God, but God's love to us is what he meant.

[3] Ibid., iii. s. 21.

[4] De Unit. Eccles., s. 49.

[5] De Unic. Bapt., s. 30. Augustine, however, is not always consistent

In proportion as the body of Christ came to be regarded as a visible corporation, enjoying delegated spiritual powers, the question of its unity, or rather oneness, arose; in what this consisted, and could be recognised. If there is no salvation beyond its pale, it was important to define the boundaries of the sacred enclosure. Apostolicity, of course, was the test; but wherein does the Church show herself to be apostolic? Tertullian alleges the succession of bishops, who could trace their descent from some one of the Apostles or their contemporaries; but he takes care to add, 'Even should they' (the heretical sects) 'feign something of this kind, it will profit them nothing. For their doctrine, when compared with the apostolical, proves by its discrepancy therefrom that it had neither an Apostle nor an apostolical man for its author; for as the Apostles could not have taught contrary to each other, so apostolical men cannot be supposed to have taught contrary to the Apostles.'[1] But this latter decisive test did not fall in with the views of Cyprian; with him the external episcopal succession is all in all. To Florentius Pupianus he writes: 'I say this in grief, inasmuch as you constitute yourself the judge of God and of Christ, who declared to His Apostles and to all bishops, who are the legitimate successors of the Apostles, "He that with himself. The following passage breathes a different spirit from those cited: 'Sicut ergo et intus quod diaboli est arguendum est, sic et foris quod Christi est agnoscendum est. An extra unitatem ecclesiæ non habet sua Christus, et in unitate ecclesiæ habet sua diabolus?'—De Bapt. cont. Don., iv. s. 13.

[1] De Præscrip. Hæret.

heareth you hears me, and he that rejects you rejects Me and Him that sent Me." For hence it is that schisms and heresies arise—from a presumptuous despising of the bishop, who alone presides over the Church. Although a contumacious band of unruly spirits may depart, the Church never separates from Christ, and they are the Church who cleave to their priest (*sacerdoti*) and pastor. You ought to know that the bishop is in the Church, and the Church in the bishop; so that if any one be not with the bishop, he is not in the Church.' So Epistle 76, ad Magn.: 'The Church is one, and therefore cannot be within and without at the same time. If it is with Novatian, it cannot have been with Cornelius. But if it was with Cornelius, who by a legitimate ordination succeeded Fabian in the episcopal chair, it cannot be with Novatian; nor can he be deemed a bishop who, setting at nought the Divine and Apostolical tradition, took his origin from himself and succeeded to no one.' As the bishop was the symbol and centre of unity to each diocese (and had theories stopped at this point, there would have been nothing unscriptural in them), so the universal episcopate represented the unity of the whole Church. Epistle 52, ad Anton.: 'There is one episcopate, diffused everywhere by the harmonious multiplicity of bishops.'

But this one episcopate was too abstract a thing to impress the popular mind; the idea must be clothed with flesh and blood; there must be a living representative of the episcopal unity. Cyprian soon arrived at

this conclusion. Scripture assigns a certain pre-eminence to the Apostle Peter; it was supposed that he had a peculiar connection with Rome, and that the occupant for the time being of that See was his successor. Here what was wanting was found. 'Schism,' Cyprian writes, 'arises from men's not recurring to the fountainhead of truth, the doctrine of our Heavenly Master. The proof is easy. The Lord says to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock," &c., and again, "Feed My sheep." Upon him alone He builds His Church, to him He commits His sheep to be fed. All the Apostles, indeed, were what Peter was—endowed with equal share of honour and power; but Christ begins with one, and the primacy is assigned to Peter, in order that it might be understood that there is one Church and one Chair. How can he who resists the Church, who deserts the Chair of Peter, upon whom the Church is founded, hope that he is in the Church?'[1] 'Those who took their journey to you' (Cornelius) 'we exhorted that they should acknowledge and hold fast by the root and mother of the Catholic Church' (the Church of Rome).[2]

As to the prerogatives of the Church, she is the vicar and representative of Christ upon earth, the inheritress of His offices, royal, priestly, and prophetical, the treasure-house of Divine grace. 'Whither is he who thirsts to betake himself? To heretics, among whom the fountain of living waters does not exist, or to the one Church? This is that one Church which possesses the whole power of her Spouse and Lord.

[1] De Unit. Eccles.

[2] Epist. 45, ad Cornel.

Those who in Samaria believed, were baptized within the pale of the Church, to which alone it has been granted to bestow the grace of baptism and the remission of sins.'[1] So Firmilian, writing to Cyprian: 'The second birth, which takes place in baptism, generates sons of God. You have shown that the name of Christ avails only in the Church, to which alone Christ has vouchsafed the power of' (imparting) 'Divine grace.' Augustine follows in the steps of his predecessor. 'The dove' (the Church) 'remits sins,' not merely by holding forth the Word of life, but of her own plenary authority.[2] The Romish doctrine of priestly intention is, to say the least, approached when Cyprian enjoins, 'Abstain from strange water, and drink not from a strange fountain. In order that the water of baptism may wash away sin, it is necessary that it be cleansed and sanctified by the priest. But how can he cleanse the water who is himself unclean and destitute of the Spirit? Or how can he by baptism convey to another remission of sins whose own sins, as being those of a schismatic, are not remitted?'[3] 'Whereas the sins of each person are remitted in baptism, the Lord, in His Gospel, teaches us that they can be remitted by those alone who have the Holy Spirit;'[4] and the Holy Spirit, it is assumed,

[1] Epist. 73, ad Jubaj.

[2] To Augustine, however, the credit is due of perceiving that the promise alluded to, John xx. 23, was given not to the Apostles only, but to the whole body of disciples then assembled—'the dove.' De Bapt. cont. Don., iii. 23, Luke xxiv. 33.

[3] Epist. 70, ad Januar.

[4] Epist. 76, ad Magn.

only resides where the legitimate succession of bishops is maintained. As regards the Sacraments, they occupy the principal place in the economy of redemption; almost, in fact, to an exclusion of the Word as a means of grace. Cyprian more than once terms Confirmation a sacrament;[1] the Eucharist is a safeguard against every spiritual enemy;[2] and a penitential discipline restores the lapsed.[3] Of the Eucharist especially, he finds the Jewish Scriptures full—Noah's drinking wine; the bread and wine of Melchisedec; Wisdom, in the Book of Proverbs, mingling her wine; Judah washing his garments in wine; and Isaiah lxiii. 2, 'Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel?' all point to the sacrament. Its sacrificial character, too, is taken for granted. 'For the martyrs,' Cyprian says, 'we continually offer sacrifices, as often as we celebrate their anniversaries.'[4] And as a sacrifice demands a priest, not presbyter, but sacerdos is his uniform designation of the clergy. Finally, the doctrine of satisfaction for post-baptismal sin, is inculcated by this Father with an emphasis to which subsequent ages could add but little. St. John writes that 'if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous.'[5] Cyprian as follows: 'I wonder that place of repentance should not be allowed to the lapsed, when it is written, "Remember how thou hast fallen, and repent and do the first works," words addressed to

[1] Epist. 72, ad Steph. [2] Epist. 54, ad Cornel.
[3] De Lapsis, *passim*. [4] Epist. 34, ad Cler.
[5] 1 John ii. 1–2.

one who had fallen and whom the Lord exhorts to rise again, and by means of good works. For it is written, "Almsgiving delivers from death;"[1] not indeed from that death which the blood of Christ hath once for all abolished, and from which the salutary grace of baptism and of our Redeemer has delivered us, but from that which is the consequence of subsequent transgression. O mockery of our brethren to exhort them to lament, to pour forth tears, to groan day and night, and in order to wash away their sins to work frequently and abundantly, and after all to refuse them the peace of the Church.'[2] Speaking of Fortunatus and Felicissimus, who had communicated with the lapsed before reconciliation with the Church, he says: 'Not to mention their other delinquencies, they hinder the lapsed from making supplication to that Christ who testifies that He is provoked. They forbid that Christ should be propitiated by prayers and satisfactions. They use every means to prevent the redemption of sin by satisfactions and due lamentations, and the cleansing of its deadly wounds by tears. But these (the schismatics) have, through the just anger of God, incurred the loss of both the sanctifying grace of baptism and the remedial aid of penitence by which guilt is removed.'[3] To the lapsed themselves his exhortation is as follows: 'Do you, beloved brethren, who retain a fear of God and a sense of your delinquency, survey with grief your transgressions, acknowledge the crime that weighs upon your conscience.

[1] Tobit iv. 10. [2] Epist. 52, ad Anton. [3] Epist. 55, ad Cornel.

To the healing of a deep wound a long medicinal process is necessary. Thinkest thou that the Lord, whom thou hast perfidiously denied, can be quickly appeased? Thou must pray more earnestly, pass the day in grief, and the night in watching and tears; prostrate thyself on the ground, roll thyself in dust and filth; having lost Christ's garment, refuse all clothing; having tasted of the devil's food, choose fasting; press on with good works, by which sins are purged away; be abundant in almsgiving, by which souls are delivered from death. What remains of your property apply to atone for your guilt and abundantly let the work go on; let all your income be expended on the healing of your wound.'[1]

Augustine follows in the wake of Cyprian. The clause in the Lord's Prayer, 'Forgive us our sins,' he expounds thus: 'This applies not to those sins which are remitted in the regeneration of baptism, but to those which, through the infirmity of our nature, we commit in daily life; for the healing of which the medicines of almsgivings, of fastings, and of prayers, are to be applied, in order that what we say in prayer we may act out in almsgiving.'[2]

When once the efficacy of Christ's atonement is thus impaired by the admixture of human merit, another step soon follows. If good works are of such avail to restore the lapsed, why may not those of Christians who have never fallen exceed the demands of the Divine law, and redound to the benefit of their

[1] De Lapsis. [2] Cont. Epist. Parm., L. ii. s. 20.

less fortunate brethren? And if the great atonement is not sufficient of itself to absolve the penitent in this life, why should it do so in the case of those (that is, all Christians) who pass out of it with the stain of sin not completely effaced? It can be no matter of surprise to find Cyprian making a near approach to the doctrine of works of supererogation, even if he does not pass the boundary. 'We believe,' he tells the lapsed, 'that the merits and works of the martyrs are of great avail with the judge.' 'It is one thing to be cast into prison, not to emerge thence till the uttermost farthing is paid, another to receive at once the reward of faith and valour; one thing to be, on account of our sins, purged and cleansed for a lengthened period by the torment of fire, another to have purged away all sin by suffering; one thing, lastly, to have our sentence suspended till the day of Christ, another to be at once crowned by the Lord.'[1]

Comment on these passages is needless. They prove that Romanism, in its distinctive tenets, is far more ancient than the Council of Trent, and that the teaching of the Church of the fourth or fifth centuries had already most seriously declined from the Apostolical standard. They prove also that, considered as expositors of Scripture, the early Fathers, whatever their piety, do not take a very high rank. Allowance must, no doubt, be made for the special circumstances in

[1] Epist. 52, ad Anton. No Christian is sinless as long as he remains on earth, but the guilt of his daily sins is daily covered by application to the finished work of Christ.

which many of them were placed, and the disadvantages under which they laboured as compared with ourselves. Let us thankfully accept their testimony to the essential Articles of the Creeds, but pause before we admit the principle that the Primitive Church is to be the model to which, in other points, we are to conform. The written Word is a sufficient rule of faith both as regards its contents and its perspicuity; to it then let us turn in discussing the question before us, the nature and constitution of the Christian Church.

NOTE.—Even in the time of Cyprian, the principles, of which Tridentine Romanism is the mature development, were actively at work in the Christian body. On one important point, however, we can claim the great divines of the period just mentioned as our own: they, with us, taught the supreme authority of Scripture in controversies of faith.

CHAPTER II

DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH

It has already been observed that both the Romish and the Protestant Churches (including in the latter term our own) are, from their common acceptance of the three Creeds, Christian Churches, and the differences between them are relative rather than absolute; and this is especially the case in reference to the present subject. From inattention to this fact mistakes have been made on both sides, each insisting on some undoubted truth as if it were peculiar to itself, without inquiring whether, and how far, it is admitted by the opposite party: whence not only have incorrect representations of what each holds been given, but the real points on which the controversy turns have been passed over, or at least, not brought out into a clear light. For example, it is difficult to understand how a writer who had examined the Protestant Confessions could have imagined that he was disposing of the question now before us, viz., the specific difference of a Christian Church as compared with other societies, by such statements as the following: 'Luther considered each believer as absolutely independent of any religious community; such being, in his view, quite unnecessary, inasmuch as

God alone' (that is, without any external instrument) 'teaches the Christian.' 'What, according to the Protestant view, can the Church be but a purely invisible community?' 'Luther's view was as follows:—Faith in Christ strikes root in a particular individual' (that is, independently of appointed means); 'if this faith advances to maturity and is openly professed, the individual becomes a recognised disciple of Christ. Should he find others of the same mind with himself, they unite together and form a society, publishing a Confession of what they believe; and thus it is that the Church as a visible body comes into existence' (in other words, Protestants hold the Church to be a mere voluntary association, acknowledging no higher authority than the private judgment of those who choose to belong to it).[1]

When a writer like Möhler, not of the inferior class of Romish controversialists best known in this country, can thus represent, or rather misrepresent, the views of his opponents, it is the less to be wondered at that well-informed persons amongst ourselves should follow in the same path. Thus a distinguished advocate of 'Church Principles' describes the Protestant teaching as follows: 'There the Church is not considered as intervening in any way between the Saviour and the individual, but rather is regarded as an institution of convention, resting upon grounds of religious expediency, and her laws as depending upon the will of individuals, whether few or many. The scheme of

[1] Möhler, 'Symbolik,' § 47.

salvation is addressed by God, not through one channel to a vast visible body, but to a selected number of particular persons. This salvation is conveyed by an operation exclusively internal, &c., &c.'[1]

To obviate misconceptions of this kind, let the statements of the Protestant Confessions, issued by public authority, be cited; and, in fairness, Romanism too must be judged by its own formularies. Some extracts then, on either side, are here given. In the seventh Article of the Confession of Augsburg the Church is thus defined: 'We teach that one holy Church shall ever be in the world. But the Church is a congregation of saints in which the Gospel is purely preached, and the sacraments rightly administered'—a definition which reappears in our nineteenth Article. Both the one and the other labour under the same want of precision in the use of the word Church. For the one holy Catholic Church of the Creed is not a visible society, and the aggregate of visible Churches in the world do not form one society save in a modified sense of the term. What our Article evidently means is a local Christian society, as indeed is evident from the latter part of it, which makes mention of the Churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome. The Latin version (*ecclesia*) admits either of the articles *a* or *the*, and the former is plainly the more appropriate.[2] A visible Church, then, is described as a congregation

[1] Gladstone, 'Church Principles,' c. iii. § 52.

[2] The same remark has been made by Archbishop Whately, 'Kingdom of Christ,' p. 150.

of professing 'saints,' and what we are to understand by this expression appears from the next Lutheran Article: 'Although a Church is *properly* (*proprie, principaliter dicta*) a society of saints, that is, true believers, yet since in this life many hypocrites and evil men are mixed up with them, it must be remembered that the Word and Sacraments lose not their efficacy by being preached and administered by the wicked.'

The Articles of Schmalcald, composed by Luther in anticipation of a conference to be held at that place between the Romish and the Protestant theologians, return 'thanks to God that, in these times, even a boy of seven years of age can tell what the Church consists of, viz., believers, holy persons, Christ's sheep who hear the voice of the Shepherd. For so do children declare their faith, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." This holiness consists not in outward things, but in' (the possession of) 'the Word of God and true faith.'

In the larger Catechism of Luther, the Catechumen confesses that 'the Holy Ghost carries on His work through the instrumentality of the Communion of Saints,' or the Church; that is, the Holy Spirit transplants us into that holy society, through which, as an instrument, He had taught us and led us to Christ: For neither could I or thou have known anything of Christ, or believed on Him, unless, through the preaching of the Gospel and the help of the Holy Spirit, we had been led thereto. The Christian Church is termed "the Communion of Saints," for in fact they are equivalent expressions, the word *ecclesia* signifying the called.

The clause, "Communion of Saints," was added to explain what the Church is (that is, in its essence or according to its idea), viz., a society or fellowship to which none but holy persons belong. The sum, therefore, is: I believe that there is upon earth a certain community of Saints, composed solely of holy persons, under one Head, collected together by the Holy Spirit. Of these I believe that I am one, having fellowship with them in the spiritual blessings which they enjoy, and united to them in one body by means of the Word of God; which hearing of the Word is the first step towards entering this community.'[1]

The Reformed, or Swiss, Churches are still more explicit. Helvetic Confession of 1566: 'Since God, from the beginning, would have men to be saved by coming to the knowledge of the truth, there must always have been, there is now, and ever shall be, a Church—that is, a community of believers or Saints gathered out of the world—whose distinction it is to know and to worship, through the Word and by the Spirit, the true God in Christ our Saviour, and by faith to participate in all the blessings freely offered to us through Christ. These are all citizens of one polity, subjects of the same Lord, under the same laws, and recipients of the same spiritual blessings. It is concerning these that the Article of the Creed, "I believe in the Holy

[1] Cat. Maj., ss. 30–42. It is worthy of notice that both the Romish and the Protestant formularies consider this clause of the Creed an explanation of the preceding one, not as a distinct article of faith; and no doubt rightly. They differ in the meaning of the word Saints, and also as to the visibility of this Communion.

Catholic Church," is to be understood. There can be but one such Church, which, moreover, we call "Catholic" because it is diffused throughout the world. The Church may be viewed under the twofold aspect of triumphant and militant, but these terms merely denote different conditions of the members of the same Church. *The Church militant upon earth has always existed under the form of particular Churches, which, however, are all connected with each other by their common relation to the one Catholic Church.* The latter is termed in Scripture the house of the living God, built of living and spiritual stones upon the rock of Christ. Hence it is called "The pillar and ground of the truth," "The bride of Christ," and "The body," of which He is the Head. The head is that part of the body which governs the whole, and from which life and power to increase are derived into the members. There can be but one head of the body, and there must be a correspondence between the two. Hence the Church can have no other Head than Christ; a spiritual body admits of none but a Spiritual Head.[1] We disapprove, therefore, of the doctrine of Rome, that the Pope is the visible head of the Universal Church and the vicar

[1] That is, the mystical body of Christ admits of no visible human head. It may be a question, however, whether Christ, as the incarnate Son, can properly be called the Head of the true, invisible Church. Were Christ now upon earth, He would not be invisible. He is the Head so far as, by virtue of His atonement and advocacy as our High-Priest in heaven, He procures for His Church the gift of the Holy Ghost; and in this sense He is the source 'of life and power to increase;' but the Holy Ghost is the direct Giver of life and sanctification. Yet as the second and the third Persons of the Holy Trinity are one as regards the Godhead—in which the true Personality of the Divine

of Christ upon earth. For we affirm that Christ Himself' (*see* Note) 'discharges in His Church all the offices of a priest and pastor, and therefore needs no vicar. A vicar implies the absence of the principal, but Christ is present, the source of all spiritual life and grace.' As to particular Churches, 'We do not at once admit the claim of every one to be a true Church; but we say that that is a true Church in which are found the notes of a true Church, especially the pure preaching of the Word. We condemn those Churches as corrupt which are not in this respect what they ought to be, however much they may boast of their succession of bishops, of their unity, and of their antiquity. The true Church may be, and has been, so reduced in numbers as to appear almost extinct, whence it may be termed an invisible Church.[1] Not that the persons who compose it are invisible, but because, being known to God alone, it often escapes notice. Not all who are nominally in the Church are true and lively members thereof; for there are in it many hypocrites, who outwardly hear the Word and partake of the Sacraments, while inwardly they are destitute of the Spirit. As long, however, as they put on the appearance of piety, though

Being resides—Christ and the Holy Spirit are interchangeable terms (John xiv. 18), and where the Holy Spirit is, there is Christ. In strictness of language, however, God, as the Holy Spirit, is the Head of the invisible Church, the direct source of all spiritual life and energy.

[1] This is not quite an accurate statement of the Protestant doctrine. Not because it may be, or is, few in point of number, but because what makes it the true Church, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in each of its members, is invisible save to God; this is why that doctrine affirms that the body of Christ is invisible.

they are not of the Church, they are counted to belong to it, just as traitors, before they are detected, enjoy the name of citizens. Hence our Lord compares the Church[1] to a net containing good and bad fishes, and to a field in which tares and wheat grow up together. The unity of the Church consists, not in sameness of external rites and ceremonies, but rather in the truth and unity of the Catholic faith. The Catholic faith is delivered to us, not in human writings, but in the Holy Scripture, and is summed up in the Apostles' Creed. The pure doctrine of the Gospel, and the ordinances appointed by Christ Himself, these are the constituent elements of the true unity of the Church.'

The Scotch Confession defines the Church to be 'a society of the elect, of all ages and countries, both Jews and Gentiles; this is the Catholic or Universal Church. This Church is invisible, known only to God, who alone knows who are His; and comprehends both the departed in the Lord and the elect upon earth.'[2]

The Tetrapolitan Confession, supposed to be the composition of Bucer, is to the same effect: 'Whereas the Church is called the bride of Christ, Mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, the Church of the first-born; it must be remembered that these sublime titles belong only to those who really believe in Christ and are the true sons of God. Over these the Saviour reigns in Spirit

[1] That is, each local Church.

[2] Conf. Scot., Art. 16.

and in truth; they are properly His Church, the Communion or Society of Saints, which in the Apostles' Creed the Church is declared to be. From this His Church, Christ is never absent; but by His Spirit sanctifies it, that He may present it to Himself without spot or wrinkle. Although that which makes this community to be the Church,[1] viz., faith in Christ, is not visible, yet the community itself is not invisible, but can be known by its fruits.'

Of all the Protestant Confessions, that known by the name Declaratio Thorunensis (that of the Polish Churches) is the clearest on the subject. 'There are,' it observes, 'particular Churches and the Church universal. The true universal Church is the community of all believers dispersed throughout the world, who are and remain one Catholic Church so long as they are united by subjection to one head, Christ, by the indwelling of one spirit, and the profession of the same faith; and this though they be not associated in one common external polity, but, as regards external fellowship and ecclesiastical regimen, be not in communion with each other. Particular Churches are societies of Christians who, besides being united by the internal bond of the Spirit, are under the same external polity. With respect to these, although they alone are true and living members of the Church who are united to Christ by faith and to Christ's body, not only externally but internally, yet, since the spiritual fellowship of Christians is a thing invisible, all who remain in

[1] That is, what constitutes its essence.

visible communion with the Church are, in the judgment of charity, to be esteemed members thereof, although many of them may, in the sight of God, be hypocrites. A true particular Church is distinguished from a false one by the profession of the true faith, the unmutilated administration of the Sacraments, and the exercise of discipline: all other notes are accidental and subordinate. As regards ecclesiastical polity, we hold that it is strictly monarchical as far as the relation between Christ and the universal Church is concerned; of particular Churches we believe the regimen, as established by Christ, to be aristocratical; yet so as we refuse not to the bishops or superintendents a certain superiority as compared with the rest of the presbyters. But we deny that there exists any *jure divino* visible head of the whole Church to whom all Churches and individuals must render obedience on pain of being excluded from the covenant of grace.'[1]

Our own formularies, aiming as they do at brevity, leave the nineteenth Article unexplained.

It may be proper, then, as a fit conclusion to the foregoing extracts, to cite the following passage from Nowell's Catechism, which, like Jewel's 'Apology,' may be considered as of semi-symbolical authority:—

'*M.* Let me hear what thou hast to say concerning the Holy Catholic Church.—*A.* Before the foundation of the world, God decreed to establish for Himself a holy society, which the Apostles called Ecclesia, or a congregation. Into this society God has collected a vast

[1] Sect. 7.

multitude of persons, who all obey Christ as their King, and confide themselves to His care and protection. To it they properly belong who truly fear God, walk in holiness, and have a sure hope of eternal life. As many as remain steadfast in this faith were predestined thereto before the foundation of the world; whereof the earnest of the Spirit in their hearts is a sure pledge.

'*M.* Give me, then, a definition of the Church.—*A.* The Church is the universal society of all the faithful whom God predestinated from eternity to everlasting life.

'*M.* Why dost thou call the Church holy?—*A.* In order to distinguish it from the congregation of the wicked. For those whom God has chosen He renews to holiness of life.

'*M.* Is faith the only way of apprehending this Church?[1]—*A.* Here, indeed, in the Creed, the Article refers properly to that community which God, by His secret election, has brought into a state of adoption towards Himself; which Church can neither be seen with the eyes[2] nor always discerned by visible signs. There is, however, also a visible Church of God,[3] the notes of which he has declared to us. A visible Church is nothing but a certain society of persons who profess the pure doctrine of Christ wherever they may be, and celebrate the Sacraments as the Word of God directs.

[1] In other words, Is it *absolutely* invisible?

[2] Namely, as a Church.

[3] Either a single local Church, or the aggregate of local Churches throughout the world.

These are the indispensable notes of a Church; but if the Church is in a healthy condition it will also exhibit the exercise of discipline.[1]

'*M.* Are not, then, all the members of this visible Church elected to life eternal?—*A.* Many belong to it who are anything but true members of the Church. Nevertheless, because wherever the Word of God is purely preached, and the Sacraments rightly administered, there will in that place be found some destined to salvation through Christ, *on this account we call the whole society a Church of God*; for Christ has promised that wherever even two or three are gathered in His name He will be in the midst of them.'[2]

It will be observed that this Catechism, like the Scottish Confession, insists upon the Divine election as the ultimate ground of the true Church, while most of the other Confessions content themselves with defining what it is in its essence when actually in existence, without entering into the question of the Divine decrees. This latter course seems, on every account, the more advisable. The real points of difference between Romanists and Protestants have no necessary connection with what are commonly called Calvinistic doctrines, and as these have been a source of controversy among Protestants themselves, it seems better to avoid the topic altogether. All the Confessions agree on the main points at issue.

[1] This question and answer are taken nearly word for word from the Genevan Catechism composed by Calvin.

[2] Nowell's *Cat. de Eccles.*

In placing side by side with them those of the Romish Church, the Catechism of the Council of Trent is the only formulary which we can employ. The Council itself, acting perhaps on the suggestion of some of the theologians present,[1] that the authority of the Church should be treated as a ruled point, observes a comparative silence on the subject, or, at least, abstains from any definition thereupon. But the Catechism supplies the defect. Commenting on the Article in the Creed, it observes that 'the subject is for a twofold reason important: firstly, because, as Augustine remarks, the prophets speak more fully and clearly about the Church than about Christ Himself; and, secondly, because a due understanding of this Article is the best safeguard against heresy—heresy being, not error merely, but error persisted in against the decisions of the Church.' After various observations on the meaning of the word *ecclesia*, the distinction between it and the synagogue, and the figures 'full of mystery,' by which the Church is described in Scripture, it proceeds: 'The Church, according to Augustine's definition, is the body of the faithful dispersed throughout the world. It consists of two parts, one triumphant, the spirits of the departed faithful, the other militant,

[1] 'D'autres, tenant pour certain et pour incontestable que par l'Église il fallait entendre l'ordre ecclésiastique, et surtout le Council et le Pape qui en est le chef, disaient que l'autorité de l'église se devait tenir pour decidée.'—Sarpi, tom. i. p. 261 (Courayer's translation, vol. i. Bk. ii. p. 237). This is the reason why in the treatises of the systematic writers of the Middle Ages, the Church, as such, has no distinct place assigned to it. In the absence of an antagonistic Protestantism, it did not occur to them to be necessary to deal with the topic.

comprehending the faithful on earth, which, however, form one and the same Church. In the Church militant two kinds of men are comprised, the good and the evil;[1] for though they differ in their life and conversation, both are believers (*fideles*), as professing the same faith and partaking of the same Sacraments. The good may be discerned, though not with unerring certainty, by their fruits; hence our Lord, when He commands us to "hear the Church," could not have meant that part which consists of the good; for since this part cannot with certainty be ascertained, we should, were this His meaning, be at a loss to whose judgment we are to have recourse.[2] The Church, therefore, comprehends both bad and good, agreeably to what Scripture says, "There is one body and one spirit."[3] With respect to the visibility of the Church, 'it is like "a city set upon a hill, which cannot be hid." For since it rightfully claims the obedience of all men, it must of necessity be a conspicuous object and easily known.'

With the view of obviating objections to this last statement, we are again reminded that both good and evil are comprehended in the Church, and referred to

[1] Why not, then, in the Church triumphant also, since the Church triumphant and militant form one and the same Church?

[2] This remark is relegated to a note, apparently as of doubtful relevancy. Why, in fact, should our Lord have meant a part when He spoke of the whole?

[3] The reader will observe the turn which the Catechism gives to this passage (Ephes. iv. 4), as if it were St. Paul's meaning that the unity of the Church consists in its containing all sorts of men within its pale.

the parables of the net and the threshing-floor.[1] From this it follows that 'only three classes of persons are excluded from the Church—unbelievers,[2] separatists, whether schismatics or heretics, and the excommunicated. All the rest, however wicked they may be, must be held to be in the Church.' These statements will receive illustration from what the Catechism says concerning the properties that belong to the Church. These, as expressed in the Creed, are three, Unity, Sanctity, and Catholicity; to which the Nicene Creed adds Apostolicity: 'The Church is one because, as the Apostle says, "there is one faith, one Lord, one baptism," but more especially because it has one invisible Ruler, Christ, and one visible, the occupant for the time being of the chair of St. Peter at Rome. Should it be objected that one Head, Christ, is sufficient for one body, the reply is that a visible Church must have a visible head; that our Lord, therefore, while governing inwardly by His Spirit, rules it visibly by his appointed vicar upon earth, at first Peter, and afterwards each successor of Peter.' The next property is Sanctity: 'The Church is called holy because it is dedicated to God; so the vessels of the tabernacle, though things inanimate, were called holy, as being set apart to God's service. No one need be surprised that the Church, which comprises the evil as well as the good, should, notwithstanding, be termed holy, for to that appellation all are entitled who profess

[1] It must be borne in mind that the Catechism is speaking all along, not of local Churches, but of the one Holy Catholic Church of the Creed.

[2] That is, heathens or infidels.

to believe in Christ, and have received the sacrament of baptism, although in many things they offend, and act not fully up to their profession.[1] The Church is termed Apostolic, both because it derives its doctrines from the Apostles, and because it is governed by an Apostolic ministry, which is the organ of the Spirit. Being thus divinely guided, this Church alone' (that is, the Romish) 'is infallible in matters of faith and practice, and all other Churches are under the dominion of Satan.' If it be asked why the Church should form an Article of the Creed which is generally supposed to refer to objects of faith, the answer is, 'Although the Church, so far as it is a community of men consecrated to Christ, is a visible body, yet the mysteries' (that is, the Sacraments) 'therein celebrated belong to the sphere of faith; it is by faith that we understand that to the Church the keys of heaven, and the power of remitting sin, and of consecrating the body of Christ have been committed. The explanatory clause appended to this Article, "the communion of saints," is chiefly to be understood as expressing that participation which all the members of the Church have in her Sacraments and other privileges. There is, however, another sense which it may bear, viz., that whatever good works are

[1] The Catechism here does not merely mean that even true Christians are never without sin, and in many things come short; that is confessed on all sides. But that men, to judge by their fruits, unrenewed in heart, form, with the spiritually renewed, one Holy Church. Those whom it describes as 'in many things offending and falling short of their promises,' are not sincere but imperfect Christians, but men who may be destitute of the Spirit of Christ, and whose lives may be openly vicious.

done by any one Christian appertain and are profitable to all, as we read, "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."'[1]

We are now in a position to gather from authentic sources the fundamental points at issue between Romanists and Protestants on this topic. On both sides it is admitted that the Christian life is essentially a social one, or, in other words, that Christ came not only to reveal certain truths or to establish an unseen fellowship between Himself and His followers, but to found a Church. 'We hold,' says the Belgic Confession, "that since out of the Church there is no salvation, no one, of whatever order or dignity he may be, is at liberty to separate himself from the congregation of the saints, and live in solitary independence; but that all are bound to unite themselves to it, to preserve its unity, and to minister to the edification of their brethren, members of the same body'[2]

It is only in social combinations that the moral faculties find a sphere for their exercise; that a division of labour is possible; that arts are cultivated; and, in short, everything comprised in the term civilisation advances. From the analogy of Nature, then, we should deem it unlikely that they who, from age to age, were to be the recipients of the spiritual life of which Christ is the Author should thereby be brought into a new relation towards God merely, and not also towards each other; that there should be

[1] Cat. Rom. de Symb., Part i. c. x. [2] Sect. 28.

true religion in the world but no Church. What we should thus anticipate we find in fact. In two passages, by a kind of prolepsis, our Lord applies to His disciples the term which afterwards became the one commonly used to distinguish them from the Jewish synagogue, the term ἐκκλησία, or public assembly.[1] He appointed two ordinances, one to mark admission into the Christian society, the other continuance therein, and both to be pledges of the union of Christians with Him and with each other.

Accordingly, the first mention of the Church in the Acts of the Apostles represents it as a community. 'They that gladly received his' (Peter's) 'word were baptized; they continued steadfastly under the teaching of the Apostles, in fellowship with each other, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers,' 'they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.'[2] No one was recognised as a Christian who did not give this visible evidence of his faith. Equally plain is it that to affirm that, according to Romanists, the Church is

[1] Matt. xvi. 18; xviii. 17. Our word Church, like the German Kirche, is derived from κυριακόν, the Lord's house.

[2] Acts ii. 41–46. Whatever the word κοινωνία may mean in ver. 42, our A. V. seems incorrect in taking it with Ἀποστόλων. Had S. Luke's meaning been 'in ecclesiastical union with the Apostles,' he would have written ἐν τῇ τῶν Ἀποστόλων διδαχῇ καὶ κοινωνίᾳ, not τῇ διδαχῇ τῶν Ἀποστόλων καὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ, as the text stands. Erroneous theories have been built on this mistranslation. See Manning, 'Unity of the Church,' p. 84.

visible, according to Protestants invisible, is wide of the mark. Both hold that it is visible, but they differ in the meaning which they attach to the word Church, or rather as regards the aspects under which the one Church may be considered. Rome, as we have seen, teaches that the Holy Catholic Church of the Creed is a visible body under one visible head; that the Romish communion is the only legitimate Church in the world; and, as a necessary inference, that this Church comprises within its enclosure Christians of all sorts—Christians only in name as well as those in reality, the evil as well as the good; in short, all except open unbelievers, separatists, and the excommunicated. 'This,' says Bellarmine, the most trustworthy expounder of the doctrines of his Church, 'is the distinction between our view and that of the Protestants, that they, to constitute any one a member of the Church' (that is, the one true Church) 'require internal virtues' (that is, the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart), 'and consequently make the true Church invisible; we, on the contrary, believe, indeed, that all internal graces, faith, hope, charity, &c., will be found in the Church, but we deny that to constitute a man a member of the true Church any internal virtue is requisite, but only an external profession of the faith, and that partaking of the Sacraments which is perceptible to the senses' (that is, which is merely outward). 'The Church, then, in its essence, is as conspicuous an object and as mixed a body as the kingdom of France or the

republic of Venice.'[1] The Protestant Confessions, also accepting the definition of the Creed, contend that it applies only to that Church which Scripture describes as the body of Christ, composed of living members of a living Head; as the bride of Christ, His by an inward as well as an external bond of union; as holy, not merely as outwardly dedicated to the service of God, like the vessels of the tabernacle, but really sanctified by the Spirit of God. This one Church, they teach, is necessarily invisible because that which makes any one a member of it, viz., the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the heart, is not an object of sense. 'That Nathanael was an Israelite, all men knew; that he was a true Israelite in whom was no guile, Christ only knew.' And yet this Church is not absolutely invisible, for its members are, of course, visible in their persons, and still more in the fruits of the Spirit which, in greater or less measure, they exhibit. But, even as a Church, it is not absolutely invisible. For although, at present, it cannot manifest itself in its corporate capacity, as one body under one Head, that Head being absent in His human nature, yet it does so under the form of the aggregate of particular Churches, of which it always forms a part, more or less coincident according to circumstances; that is, according as human discipline, as far as it can, separates from it unworthy members, or persecution for Christ's sake exercises a purifying agency. 'Extra vocatorum cœtum non sunt quærendi

[1] De Eccles. Mil., c. ii.

electi.' But, from another point of view, the true Church is also invisible, viz., in so far as we cannot do more than approximate to the real position which each member occupies in it. Many are first in a visible Church who are last in the true Church, and many who are first in the latter are not so in the former.

The spiritual aristocracy of the Church, either as regards holiness or special gifts, does not always come to the front. After every effort to secure its recognition mistakes will occur; the gift of spiritual discernment,[1] in passing through an earthly channel, itself contracts imperfections; and no local Church, as regards the distribution of its orders and offices, will ever be quite as it would be were Christ Himself to distribute them. As in the individual, so in the body there is a hidden life which, do what we will, remains more or less a hidden one. This is only saying that, since the true Church is not merely an effect of Christ's saving work, but the instrument of carrying on that work in the world, and can only discharge this latter function under the form of particular Churches, it becomes, when thus regarded as an instrument, affected with the imperfections which belong to these Churches. Local Churches may be regarded either singly, as independent Christian societies, or as the aggregate of such; and in the latter sense we may speak of visible Christendom. They may, and if in a healthy state do, maintain intercommunion with each other; but neither one of them, nor the whole collectively, is identical

[1] διάκρισις, 1 Cor. xii. 10.

with the mystical body of Christ; and as soon as that becomes thus visible, it necessarily comprises foreign elements which form no essential part of it.

This is the imperfection under which the one true Church at present labours, but it is only an accident of its present condition, not inherent in its nature. That division of the Church which consists of departed saints is already freed from such heterogeneous admixtures, and when Christ comes again to gather the wheat into His garner, the full manifestation of the sons of God, for which the creature is waiting (Rom. viii. 19), will take place, and the true and the visible Church will become coextensive. The Romish theory, as will have been seen, disjoins the Church militant from the Church triumphant—one being a mixed body, the other not—and so, as Augustine expresses it, makes the body of Christ *bipartitum*, like the image of Daniel, the head of which was of gold and the feet of clay.[1] And here it may be noted in what sense a local Church is a true one. Not that all its members are in saving union with Christ; not that it possesses a certain polity or succession of bishops; but because there the pure Word of God is preached and the Sacraments duly administered. But what, it may be asked, is the pure Word of God? It may be an ideal which is never actually reached, but it is enough if the Church professes to found its teaching on Scripture alone, and administers the Sacraments as Scripture would have them administered. We hold that the Church of

[1] Dan. ii. 32, 33.

Rome, when tried by these tests, inasmuch as it does not preach the pure Word of God and does mutilate one Sacrament, is not a true Christian, though we cannot deny that it is a Christian Church.

Equally remote from the truth are the assertions of Möhler and others, that, according to Protestant views, the Church in no way and to no extent intervenes between the Saviour and individuals; that God, without the use of means, alone teaches the Christian; that conversion is an exclusively internal operation; and that it is by reading the Scriptures (Möhler seems to insinuate that even this means is thought unnecessary) that, ordinarily, persons are first brought to the knowledge of Christ, &c. The functions of the Church in the application of Christ's saving work to individuals would, no doubt, be differently described by a Romanist and a Protestant; but that the Church's instrumentality, in some way, is employed in the work, neither the former nor the latter deny. 'The Holy Spirit,' says Luther, 'carries on His quickening and sanctifying work by means of the Communion of Saints or the Christian Church.'[1] 'The Holy Spirit, by the preaching of the Word, transplants us into His society, the Church, through which (that is, the Word), as an instrument, He leads us to Christ, and teaches us.' 'Where the doctrine of Christ is not taught, there the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to

[1] Not directly by the Communion of Saints or body of Christ, but by its earthly and temporary form, local Churches, either one or the aggregate.

establish the Church, does not work.'[1] 'God,' say the Swiss Protestants, 'could indeed, by an immediate exercise of His power, add persons to the Church, but He prefers to act upon man through the ministry of men. We must be on our guard against the error of so attributing the work of our conversion and edification to the secret influence of the Spirit as to make void the office of the ministry.'[2] This, too, is according to the analogy of Nature. The rule observed is not to interfere perpetually, and in the way of miracles, in its administration, but to effect the Divine purposes mediately, and by the agency of fixed laws.

Thus the Creator, having at first launched the planets into space by a direct exercise of His Almighty power, and assigned to each a determinate path, does not repeat the original miracle, but regulates their motions by the law of gravity, as a secondary cause. And thus it was, even from the first, as regards the Christian Church. The possession of miraculous gifts did not render the ministrations of the first preachers of the Gospel unnecessary; still less of their successors. The Church being in the first instance formally constituted by the Pentecostal descent of the Holy Spirit, was thenceforward to perpetuate itself, and evangelise the world, by the agency of human instruments. By the Word preached disciples were to be gathered in, by the same Word they were to be built up in the faith, and how could they hear without a preacher? By pastoral instruction the Catechumens and children

[1] See above, p. 45.

[2] Conf. Helv., c. 18.

of the society were to be prepared for full communion with the Church, and for transmitting, in their turn, the faith as they had received it; and how could this be done without instructors? The work of Missions is subject to the same law. To send the Bible to the heathen before the ground has been prepared by the Holy Spirit, seconding human agency, is not the method for which we have precedent in Scripture.[1]

Once more, it must in fairness be conceded to the Romanist that he does not deny that there is a two-fold point of view from which not the Church as a whole but its members may be considered, an outward and an inward one. The Romish Catechism, while declaring that the Church, in its idea and essence, consists both of the good and the evil, does make a distinction between the living and the dead members, and admits that under the shell of external profession there exists, or ought to exist, a kernel of those who are in vital communion with the Saviour. 'The good,' it tells us, 'are those who are united to each other, not only by a common profession of faith and reception of the Sacraments, but by the Spirit of grace and the bond of charity; of whom it is said: "The Lord knoweth them that are His."[2] And Bellarmine

[1] This is the particle of truth in Archdeacon Grant's Bampton Lectures on Missionary Work. He is right in arguing that to expect to convert the heathen by a book or books is not in accordance with Apostolic procedure. To admit this, by no means involves a recognition of his theory that Missions cannot be expected to prosper unless not only the Word is preached, but the Church in its full organisation of bishops, priests, and deacons is sent to occupy the field.

[2] Cat., Part i. c. x.

sanctions the following statement of Augustine: The Church is a living system, composed both of a body and a soul; the soul being the internal gifts of the Spirit, faith, love, &c., and the body an outward profession of the faith and use of the Sacraments. Hence it follows that some belong both to the body and the soul of the Church—viz., the truly pious; these may be compared to the living members of the body, although they partake of life in different degrees. Others belong only to the soul, as Catechumens or the excommunicated, if (as may happen) they have faith and love. Others, lastly, are of the body only, such, namely, as, while they have not inward grace, are in outward Communion with the Church.[1]

Thus far all Christians, or if not all, certainly the Romish and Protestant Churches, are agreed. It would have been needless to call attention to so obvious a fact were it not that this common ground has been by Romish controversialists, and by those amongst ourselves who are that way disposed, appropriated as exclusively their own. That the Holy Catholic Church is, in some sense, visible; that Christians must, as a rule, be members of a Christian society, and participate in the ordinances appointed by Christ; that the Church is the instrument by which Christ both calls and builds up His own, and extends His kingdom in the world; further, that the Church is of Divine institution, and not a mere voluntary association—these truths are often insisted on as destructive of, or at least incom-

[1] De Eccles. Mil., c. ii., ad fin.

patible with, Protestant teaching. As if every Protestant Confession did not distinctly enunciate them! When, therefore, we are reminded that the Church of Scripture is no Platonic Republic; that the sacraments are necessary, where they can be had, to salvation; that unity and the suppression of selfish individualism should be aimed at;[1] we reply that if it is thereby insinuated that Protestants are indifferent to, or find no place for, such truths in their system, it only shows that the writers are either unacquainted with or misrepresent the views of their opponents, and what they would fain appropriate to themselves is nothing but the common belief of Christians.

But if there is, in fact, so large a field of coincidence between the contending parties, what room is left for debate? We reply that, even if the difference is not absolute, but relative, it may still lead to important results. St. Paul and St. James on the subject of justifying faith must, we know, be reconcilable; yet from insisting on one to the practical exclusion of the other, erroneous doctrines have arisen. So it is in the present case. It is the relative position and importance which either party assigns to what is visible and what is invisible in the Church that the debate turns on. The Romanist, while granting that there is, or ought to be, in the Church a hidden life, not cognisable by human eye, regards this as a separable accident, or a thing which may be dispensed with without damage to the true idea of the Church; the

[1] Möhler, Symb., § 37.

Protestant, while granting that the Church is and must be, in a sense, visible, holds that the specific difference thereof consists in what is spiritual, and therefore unseen. Neither can absolutely refuse assent to the well-known aphorism of Irenæus, 'Ubi ecclesia, ibi est spiritus Dei; ubi spiritus Dei, ibi ecclesia;' but since, in its two clauses, it may be held to represent different *tendencies*—on the one hand, to make the presence of the Holy Spirit dependent on, and in point of time posterior to, the visible organisation of the Church, and on the other, to make what is visible in the Church dependent on the presence of the Holy Spirit—it fairly expresses the real point of controversy.

To the question, What is the Church? the Romanist replies that it is an institution of Divine appointment as visible as the kingdom of France, and entrusted with certain supernatural powers, of which men are to be made members in order to be gradually moulded into the Divine image; a school of training and discipline to prepare them for the presence of God hereafter: the Protestants, that *proprie principaliter dicta*,—*before it is anything else*, it is the body of those to whom the Word preached has been the means of bringing them into a state of salvation, and who are sanctified by the Holy Spirit (*pro ratione hujus vitæ*).

The distinction which the Romanist makes between the living and the dead members does not affect his definition of the Church, for membership in the body of Christ and a state of salvation are with him not identical; the latter, indeed, can only be affirmed of

those who are renewed in heart, but the former may be enjoyed by those living in mortal sin.

Divesting thus the Church, in its idea, of any necessary connection with the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost, he is compelled to consider it as, primarily, a visible institution, the *differentia* of which lies in its polity, its rites, or its episcopal succession. Or the difference may be thus stated: The Romanist regards what is visible in the Church as the antecedent, the Protestant as the consequent, of the life within; the one attaches a value to the outward framework in itself, the latter values it chiefly as evidence of the unseen work of the Holy Spirit. Möhler correctly observes: 'The Lutherans' (Protestants) 'affirm that the visible Church owes its existence to the invisible; we hold that the visible Church is first in the order of time, afterwards the invisible; the relation of the former to the latter being that of cause and effect.'[1] He adds, very justly, that this apparently unimportant difference leads to widely divergent systems of theology. Schleiermacher's remark, too, is to the point: 'Protestantism makes the relation of the individual to the Church dependent on his relation to Christ; Romanism makes his relation to Christ dependent on his relation to the Church.'[2] Or we may refer to a writer of our own, who will not be suspected of ultra-Protestant tendencies, Jeremy Taylor. In his 'Dissuasive from Popery' he thus writes: 'The Church of God is the body of Christ, but the mere profession of Christianity

[1] Symb., § 48.

[2] Glaubenslehre, § 24.

makes no man a member of Christ; neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything in Christ Jesus; nothing but a new creature; nothing but a faith working by love, and keeping the commandments of God. Now they that do this are not known to be such by men, but they are known only to God; and therefore it is in a true sense the invisible Church; not that there are two Churches, or two societies, in separation from each other; or that one can be seen by men and the other cannot; for then, either we must run after the Church which we ought not to imitate, or be blind in the pursuit of the other which can never be found, and our eyes serve for nothing but to run after false fires. No, these Churches are but one society, the one is within the other; they walk together to the house of God as friends; they take sweet counsel together, and eat the bread of God in common; but yet though the men be visible, yet that quality and excellence by which they are constituted Christ's members, and distinguished from mere professors and outsides of Christians, is not visible. All that do really and heartily serve Christ *in abdito* do also profess to do so; the invisible Church ordinarily and regularly is part of the visible, but yet that part only that is the true one; and the rest but by denomination of law and in common speaking, are the Church—not in mystical union with Christ, not in proper relation to Christ; they are not the house of God, not the temple of the Holy Ghost, not the members of Christ; and no man can deny this. Hypocrites

are not Christ's servants, and therefore not Christ's members; and therefore no part of the Church, but improperly and equivocally, as a dead man is a man: all which is perfectly summed up in those words of St. Austin, saying that "the body of Christ is not *bipartitum*; it is not a double body; *non enim revera Domini corpus est quod cum illo non erit in æternum*; all that are Christ's body shall reign with Him for ever."'[1]

The foregoing remarks will, it is hoped, meet the objections which are even at this day raised against Protestant teaching by some who are well aware that its doctrine of the invisible Church is, in fact, the hinge of the controversy, and exhibit therefore a peculiar hostility towards it. This feeling has lately given occasion to a republication of Law's work on the subject, who, in controversy with Hoadly, is supposed to have annihilated his opponent. With a brief notice of this production the present chapter will be brought to a close.

Two charges are brought against the Bishop of Bangor; one that he persistently opposes the invisible Church to the visible, or rather to the outward ordinances of the latter: 'This has appeared to be your

[1] P. ii. B. 1, § 1. J. Gerhard puts the matter in a clear light: 'Distinguimus inter ecclesiam particularem et Catholicam. Particulares ecclesias visibiles esse non negamus, Catholicam autem invisibilem asserimus. Militans ecclesia est quidem hominum societas qui, quatenus prædicatione verbi et administratione Sacramentorum in unam societatem colliguntur, ecclesiam visibilem constituunt; sed quatenus ad ecclesiam Catholicam pertinent, interno, spirituali, et invisibili fidei, spei, et caritatis, vinculo cum Capite suo et inter se invicem colliguntur; quod vinculum et quæ connexio cum sit invisibilis, ex eo efficitur Catholicam ecclesiam esse invisibilem.'—Loc. xxii. §§ 79 and 82.

doctrine in almost every page, that you set up this invisible Church in opposition to outward and visible ordinances.'[1] 'Your Lordship has all along considered and described this invisible Church in opposition to the visible, and made those outward acts which are necessary to the visible Church so many marks to distinguish it from that which is invisible.'[2] No one is responsible for what Hoadly may have written, nor is it necessary to inquire whether he may have expressed himself with the exactness which the subject certainly demands. But it is certain that no Protestant Confession makes the distinction between the Holy Catholic Church of the Creed and the aggregation of local Churches in the world an absolute one. It is one and the same Church, they all declare, but regarded from different points of view, ἔσωθεν καὶ ἔξωθεν, from within or from without; viewed from within, it is the true Church, or a part of it; viewed from without, as a local Christian society, it is a mixed body, and cannot in this life be any other. All affirm that the true members of Christ in such a society are also members outwardly, that is, in the profession of the same faith and the use of the Sacraments, with the other members of it; and that, should any one refuse to exhibit these outward evidences of his sincerity, it would be at any rate doubtful whether he does belong to the invisible Church. All deny the right of a member to separate himself, without adequate reason, from the local community in which he received his baptism; certainly not, as long as in it

[1] Let. iii s. 5.

[2] Ibid.

the pure Word is preached and the Sacraments duly administered.

But it is needless to repeat what has been already said. Let Field, once for all, reply: 'Hence it cometh that we say there is a visible and invisible Church; not meaning to make two distinct Churches, as our adversaries do falsely and maliciously charge us, though the form of words may seem to insinuate some such thing, but to distinguish the divers considerations of the same Church, which, though it be visible in respect of the profession of supernatural verities revealed in Christ—use of Holy Sacraments, order of ministry and due obedience yielded thereunto, and they discernible that communicate therein; yet in respect of those most precious effects and happy benefits of saving grace wherein only the elect do communicate, it is invisible; and they that in so happy, gracious, and desirable things have communion among themselves are not discernible from others to whom this fellowship is denied, but are known only to God.'[1] Law argues fairly enough that an absolutely invisible Church is as inconceivable as invisible Scriptures or invisible Sacraments; and if Hoadly meant this, let him answer for himself; he meant what no authorised formulary of the Protestant Churches teaches. The aggregation of local Christian Churches contains the invisible Church, but to this extent only, that the latter is not to be sought for outside the former; it contains the invisible Church, but in the present imperfect and temporary condition

[1] On the Church, Bk. I. c. x.

thereof, and therefore not in its truth as a Church, not in its corporate capacity; all which imperfections will disappear at the manifestation of the sons of God. The sentence of separation on that day will be, 'Depart from Me,' not because you were true but unworthy members of My mystical body, but because 'I never knew you.' You never were members at all.[1]

But, proceeds Law (and this is the second point on which he charges Hoadly with inaccuracy), 'Our Saviour Himself tells us that the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind, and like the marriage supper which the king made for his son, at which good and bad were gathered together; in these parables it is out of all doubt that our Saviour describes His universal kingdom or Church.'[2] It admits, on the contrary, of grave doubt whether the expression kingdom of heaven or its equivalent, kingdom of God, ever in the New Testament refers directly to the Church as a visible society. In such passages as the following: 'When He was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for behold the kingdom of God is within you' (or amongst you in the Saviour's own person, though they did not recognise it).[3] 'The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;'[4] 'My kingdom is not of this world;'[5]

[1] Matt. vii. 23 [2] Let. iii. s. 1. [3] Luke xvii. 20, 21.
[4] Rom. xiv. 17. [5] John xviii. 36.

'Thy kingdom come' (it is still therefore a future thing);[1] surely the kingdom of God means something more spiritual and of wider meaning than its embodiment in the Christian Church, even considered as the mystical body of Christ.

The expression directs our thoughts back to the Jewish economy. Under it Jehovah constituted Himself a temporal King, giving laws to a subject people, enforcing those laws by temporal sanctions, and demanding not merely a constrained obedience but the willing service of hearts grateful for benefits received and privileges conferred.

The Jewish theocracy was at the time the kingdom of God amongst men. The subjects of it failed to perceive its spiritual import, and as the outward condition of the nation became more and more depressed, the more did they cling to the hope that at some future time Messiah would appear, and restore the glory of the reigns of David and Solomon. Prophecy corrected such anticipations, but still spoke, in glowing imagery, of an approaching kingdom of God, to be ruled over by a Scion of the house of David. The Advent of Christ was a fulfilment of these predictions; the kingdom of God was present in Him, to whom Pilate unconsciously bore witness, 'Behold your King,'[2] and on the day of Pentecost the body of which He was to be the King was formally constituted. Unquestionably, then, the Church, the invisible Church of Protestantism is one, and the

[1] Matt. vi. 10.

[2] John xix. 14.

latest, and the most signal, manifestation of this kingdom; but even such an application of the term does not exhaust its full meaning, and prophecy still points to a future Theocracy more glorious and more comprehensive than any which the people of God have hitherto enjoyed.[1] When, therefore, Law tells us that the kingdom of God is like a net, &c., we respect the writer's piety but not his exegesis. Each local Christian community is the net or the marriage feast, but the kingdom of Christ, or of heaven, is the sphere in which Christ reigns, here by His Spirit, hereafter in person; and as such the parables in question do not directly apply to it. Connection is not identity.

NOTE.—The degree of indistinctness which most students of Pearson must have felt to pervade his article on the Holy Catholic Church proceeds entirely from his setting out with the position that the Church in its idea comprehends both good and bad. What is evidently wanting is the Protestant doctrine, that those who are not in their persons holy do not, even in this life, properly belong to the Church: elsewhere, however, in this same article Pearson fully adopts the Protestant view.

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[1] Rev. v. 9, 10; vii. 9–17; xxi.–xxii.

CHAPTER III

THE PROGRESSION OF REVELATION

THE sacred history informs us that the effects of the Fall were speedily visible in the universal corruption of mankind. The knowledge of the true God, His perfections and attributes, being lost, and no standard of right and wrong existing, save the imperfect 'work of the law written in the heart,'[1] the world became, not only corrupt, but, with few exceptions, unconscious of its fallen state, and indifferent to means of recovery. Had the promised Saviour appeared amongst men in this stage of their moral progress, He would have found them unprepared for the reception of the truths which centred in His person and His work. The method, therefore, of the Divine Wisdom was to lead our race through a long and gradual process of preparatory training, by means of which the most influential portions of it, at least, might be fitted to embrace the Gospel when it should please its Divine Author to propose it to their acceptance. As regards the heathen world, this process was negative. It was left to itself, to arrive at the conviction that man, from his own resources, could never raise himself to God.

[1] Rom. ii. 15.

This experience, coupled with a sense of the folly of the popular systems of idolatry, and a general craving amongst earnest inquirers for some unquestionable revelation to remove the cloud which hung over their present condition and future prospects, was the amount of illumination, if it may be so called, vouchsafed to the pagan world.

Enlightened heathens, when Christ came, were prepared to receive the Gospel, simply because every school of philosophy and every mythical system had confessed their insufficiency to meet the spiritual wants of man. But something more than this was needed to secure a footing for the Gospel, whenever it should be promulgated. There needed to exist a positive groundwork of spiritual knowledge with which Christianity might connect itself, a rudimental outline of which Christianity should be the filling up. Especially was it desirable that such a basis of religious feeling and knowledge should be found in the particular locality in which the Saviour was to be born, and where His earthly pilgrimage was to run its course. Such a favoured spot would form a nucleus whence the rays of Divine light might diffuse themselves far and wide. And so it was ordered. Abraham, the progenitor of the chosen people, was, by Divine command, separated from his country and kindred, and with his posterity made the subject of a special covenant with God.

In due season, when the descendants of the patriarch had become sufficiently numerous, they were led forth under the conduct of Moses, from the contamination

and bondage of Egypt, and put in possession of the land promised to their fathers. At the same time they received that national polity and code of law, civil, moral, and ceremonial, under which they continued to exist until the temple was destroyed. The history of the Jews prior to the Mosaic institute may be dismissed from view; but that institute itself bears directly on the question now before us, the nature and constitution of the Christian Church. For then, for the first time, the chosen people were constituted into a community or polity, temporal indeed in its structure, but intended to lead to religious results; if we cannot say it was a Church, in the Christian sense of the Word, it was the very place 'where the Lord lay.' Moreover, Christianity was the historical offspring of Judaism. The founders of the Church and the first Christians were Jews; their Scriptures form part of our Canon. The Law of Moses claims to be of Divine origin, even in a stricter sense than the institutions of Christ. The inspired writers contrast the Law with the Gospel; a whole treatise (the Epistle to the Hebrews) is devoted to the subject; but they never dissociate the one from the other. The Gospel lay hid under the types and symbolism of the Law. They do, however, contrast the two dispensations most distinctly; not merely as type and antitype, but in the mode of their operation; 'the Law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ;'[1] and in order to gain

[1] John i. 17.

true views of what the Church of Christ is, we must carefully examine the nature and spiritual effect of the preparatory institute out of which it emerged. Romanism designates the Gospel a 'new law'; not in the sense of a novelty, but of being a continuation substantially of the Jewish. Is the assumption a correct one? What was the direction of Divine revelation in its progress from Moses to Christ?

1. A legal dispensation is, as its name signifies, one, the pervading principle of which is to operate from without inwards, or to form, by means of discipline and habituation, certain habits of thought and feeling in those placed under it. The term 'law,' in its proper sense, denotes a rule of conduct, whether external or internal, imposed by authority, and operating on the subject by constraint. It therefore presupposes a certain degree of indisposition towards its requirements, or at least a feebleness of moral self-determination which requires a prop to support it. Thus Hooker observes, 'Laws politic' (he might have added all kinds of law), 'ordained for external order and regiment, are never framed as they should be, unless presuming the will of man to be inwardly obstinate, rebellious, and averse from all obedience to the sacred laws of his nature;'[1] and a greater authority than Hooker reminds us that 'the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners.'[2] Hence, when a religious system is constructed on the legal system, it contents

[1] Eccl. Pol., i. c. 10.

[2] 1 Tim. i. 9.

itself at first with prescribing the outward act, and with obedience thereto, irrespectively of or at least not primarily solicitous about, the motive of the obedience, whether love or fear; it lays down particular rules, enjoins specific acts of worship, appoints 'days and months and times and years;' instead of general principles abounds in details, and generally regulates from without the manner in which the Supreme Being is to be served. Its appointments necessarily wear an arbitrary and artificial aspect, for the intention being to curb the irregular propensities of human nature, and to give a specific direction to whatever sentiments of a better kind may be present, positive enactments, the reason of which may not be apparent, are multiplied, and the more arbitrary these enactments seem, the better adapted are they to secure the proposed end. The undisciplined will must be met and overcome by provisions which, at the time, seem to have no other recommendation than that they do run counter to it. On the other hand, where internal habits of piety are supposed to be present, and the command, instead of standing over against the individual, to be, in Scripture language, 'written upon the heart,' where the will of God and the will of man are presumed to be substantially in unison, moral appeals take the place of legal prescriptions, and specific directions are exchanged for general principles. And the dispensation of which this is the character is, so far, opposed to a legal one.

The nature of the Mosaic institution may be illustrated from analogous instances which nature supplies—

the state, and the family. Thus, as Hooker remarks, political government is matter of law, not, however, merely in its function of repressing crime and preserving life and property, but, according to the ancient conception of a state, as a school of virtuous training for the citizens, such as floated before the mind of Plato in his imaginary republic. Laws act by compulsion, but they also possess the power of awakening the slumbering conscience by stamping the brand of criminality on practices which had previously been thought indifferent, and thus nations have been trained to abandon vices or immoral customs. But the work is from without, not from within, and proceeds by discipline and habituation.[1] Still more to the point is the process of education in the family and beyond it, and the analogy is employed freely in Scripture. All that the teacher expects to find, at first, in his pupils is innate capacities on which moral habits may be engrafted; the habits themselves, such as truthfulness, honour, patience, self-restraint, and attention, he proposes to form by suitable discipline. He lays down regulations to which he requires unquestioning obedience. He connects the idea of suffering with transgressions, and pleasure with obedience. As the pupil advances in moral perception and strength of will, this treatment is exchanged for another, and appeals are made to conscience and the moral sense. Such, according to St.

[1] *Μαρτυρεῖ δὲ καὶ τὸ γινόμενον ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν· οἱ γὰρ νομοθέται τοὺς πολίτας ἐθίζοντες ποιοῦσιν ἀγαθούς, καὶ τὸ μὲν βούλημα παντὸς νομοθέτου τοῦτ' ἐστίν.*—Arist. Ethic. Nic., ii. c. 1.

Paul, was the process by which the Jew was trained for the reception of the Gospel. He was taught the elements (στοιχεῖα) of religion, as we do children, by images appealing to sense and symbolism; he was placed, though an heir, 'under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the Father;'[1] he was fenced round by a ceremonial law as a barrier against the contamination of the idolatrous nations around, and under the shelter of which the blossoms of spiritual religion might in safety unfold themselves.

But more than this; as an additional safeguard, Jehovah assumed the character of a temporal monarch, and not only gave the Israelites their law, but charged Himself with the administration of it. The system was a fusion of civil and religious polity, the only one of Divine appointment which history presents us with. To worship other gods was not only a sin but a crime, a crime *læsæ majestatis*, and as such punishable with death. This feature alone betrays the imperfection of the Mosaic economy; for no sooner does religion, as in Christianity, enthrone herself in the conscience, and assert her right to govern the inner man; no sooner does she become a religion of 'spirit and truth,' than she rises above the sphere of civil law, and, as is now generally acknowledged, refuses to have her claims enforced by the secular arm. The sanctions of the Mosaic law were exclusively temporal. No hint is dropped in it of a future state, either of reward or of punishment. It may be true that 'the old fathers did not look only

[1] Gal. iv. 2.

for transitory promises,'[1] but their hopes were founded not on the revelation of Moses, but on primitive tradition, the surmises of piety, and more directly on the prophetic teaching. The Law was imposed on a nation, and nations, as such, are not subjects of future retribution. The Jews were enjoined to love and obey Jehovah, but temporal mercies, their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, their preservation in the wilderness, the subjugation of their enemies, a land flowing with milk and honey, were the rewards promised to obedience. Disobedience was to be visited with war, famine, and pestilence.[2]

With such a system it was quite in keeping that a visible symbol of the Divine presence should be connected with a certain locality; that a human priesthood should be appointed to mediate between God and His people; that that priesthood should be confined to a particular family, and perpetuate itself by natural descent, irrespectively of other qualifications: that lustrations and 'the blood of goats and calves' should suffice to cleanse from legal defilement; that particular sacrifices should be appropriated to particular trans-

[1] Art. vii.

[2] The tendency, not unnatural in Christians, to introduce more of the Gospel, its doctrines and sanctions, into the Old Testament, and even as early as the Pentateuch, than can be fairly gathered from facts, has sometimes led to unwarranted conclusions. But more than that, it has introduced the Law into the Gospel. If the patriarchs or prophets had the Gospel as we have it, the distinction between the two covenants disappears, and Christianity becomes a spiritualised Judaism. The progression of revelation is lost sight of. It was only at a late period that even the resurrection of the body came to be generally received, and then only as a popular opinion.

gressions; that investiture with the holy garments and oil should consecrate Aaron and his descendants. For here the forms of religion possessed an independent importance; it was by and through them that the pupil was to be trained to a higher stage. The legislator held human nature in a fixed mould, until it had received the desired impression; the mould must therefore be of inflexible material and of elaborate finish; it must press on all parts of the religious life, prescribing every function and insisting on every detail. An elastic mould would be quite unsuitable for its purpose. Thus an external hold, at least, on human nature, was gained; a *fact* of religious worship was, to begin with, enforced, by means of which the way might be prepared for further development. Hence it was confessed, even by a Christian Jew, to be a yoke of bondage which neither he nor his fathers were able to bear.[1] Such were the leading features of the Mosaic institute.

If it should appear strange that such a system, so rudimental, and so inadequate to express the true relation between man and his Maker, should have been divinely appointed, let the spiritual condition of the Jewish people when they left Egypt be remembered, and the difficulty will disappear. Their conceptions of religion were so rude as to render them incapable of a more spiritual worship. They who, beholding the work of their own hands, exclaimed, 'These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of

[1] Acts xv. 10.

Egypt,'[1] were in no fit state for anything more spiritual. The idolatrous practices of Egypt had acquired so firm a hold on them that it took centuries of discipline to purge out the taint. They were always casting an eye on the forbidden fruit. At length the lesson was learned, and the pious Israelite could say, 'Oh how I love Thy law; it is my meditation all the day.'[2] But although the rest of the nation shared in the improvement so far as a detestation of idolatry is concerned, it had, at the time of Christ, fallen into another snare which indisposed it to receive Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. It had forgotten the lessons of its own prophets, that the Law was only a temporary dispensation, interposed between the covenant with Abraham and its fulfilment in Christ, 'added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.'[3] They clung to the notion that the Messiah was to introduce a new law, with corresponding temple services and ritual, but freed from the particularism of the old,[4] and draw all nations within its pale. Their religion became one of the letter and not of the Spirit; they made void their own Scriptures by their traditions and additions; they crucified the Lord of glory, and have ever since been paying the penalty of their crime.

Yet the Law in itself was neither the cause nor the occasion of this lamentable frustrating of the Divine

[1] Exod. xxxii. 4. [2] Ps. cxix. 97. [3] Gal. iii. 19.

[4] Such was the tendency of Alexandrian Judaism, as represented by Philo.

purposes. Even considered apart from subsequent Divine teaching, whether prophetical or other, it must, when it met with well-disposed and reflecting minds, have tended to its own dissolution. The 'pious Jew' could not long have remained a legalist. For the Law contained requirements which never appear in human legislation, viz., the surrender of the heart to the Legislator, and the duties of the immutable moral law. 'Thou shalt have no other gods but me;' the primary meaning of this commandment may be that assigned to it by Moses, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord,' as contrasted with the gods many of heathenism; but the legislator takes care to add, 'And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.'[1] Similarly the requirements of the second table were summed up, even at that early period, in the comprehensive precept, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.[2] Now in proportion as the comprehensiveness of these precepts forced itself on the attention of the devout inquirer, that element of piety, the absence of which is the conspicuous defect in the best systems of heathen moral philosophy, viz., conviction of sin, must, in the same proportion, have advanced. To render external obedience to the civil and the ceremonial law was comparatively easy; to love God with all the heart, and one's neighbour as himself, would soon be felt impossible to unaided human nature. Yet the command abated not one jot of its claims; these were never lowered

[1] Deut. vi. 4-5.

[2] Lev. xix. 18.

in condescension to the weakness of humanity; it required perfect obedience, and would be satisfied with nothing else. Under such a measure of the Holy Spirit as was then vouchsafed, a classification of the legal precepts might be expected to commence; the Israelite without guile would come to subordinate precept to precept, the greater duties of religion to the less, the outward form to the inner spirit. Of this we have an example in the ready acquiescence of the Scribe in the answer of Christ to the question, 'Which is the first commandment of all?' 'Well, Master, thou hast said the truth, for there is one God, and there is none other but He, and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.'[1] What an advance from the Judaism of Sinai to that of the contemporaries of Christ! But it must have been the result of a long and gradual process. And these weightier matters of the law were precisely those which must have tended to produce a conviction of sin, and to direct the thoughts and expectations of devout men to a spiritual as contrasted with a temporal Redeemer, to a new dispensation as contrasted with the old one. Conviction of sin is the first step, whether under the law or the gospel, to a due estimate of the Christian redemption, and the law, taken as a whole, could not have failed to produce it. In doing so, it practically antiquated itself, and set the seal to its own condemnation as a final dispensation,

[1] Mark xii. 32.

opening the way back to the tree of life. In this sense, as in others, it was 'a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.'

But we are not left, in this matter, wholly to surmise. One book of Holy Scripture there is which confirms the anticipations formed—the Book of Psalms. These inspired compositions are not only a manual of Divine instruction for the Church, but records of the spiritual experience of their authors: they furnish, therefore, an authentic description of the pious Jew in his feelings and convictions, more than 1000 years before Christ! And what is its prevailing character? That the writers lived under the law is plain; but it is also plain that they were not of the law—that is, that they had advanced from a religion of form and ceremonial to one of spirit and truth. 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.'[1] 'I will praise the name of the Lord with a song; this shall please the Lord better than a bullock that hath horns and hoofs.'[2] 'Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High.'[3] These are but specimens of what they were prompted to write. That remarkable composition, the 51st Psalm, is of itself sufficient to establish the progression and its direction. Indeed, when we mark the Psalmist's conviction of original and actual sin, his acknowledgment of what God requires, 'truth in the inward parts'; his

[1] Ps. xxiv. 3-5. [2] Ps. lxix. 31. [3] Ps. l. 7-14.

longing for a more perfect atonement for sin than the legal rites could furnish; his prayer for the restoration of spiritual joy, and especially the sentiment that the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart is of more value in God's sight than all the legal offerings; we recognise that his religion has become essentially Christian, that there was a Christianity among this people, even at that date, before Christ. The difference is that the objects of faith are not yet distinctly apprehended, and that the outward fence of the law still shelters its pupil until the time should come for full emancipation.

2. Our Lord, adopting the current language of the age, spoke of the elder revelation under the threefold division of the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, and the division is, for practical purposes, convenient. It is not, however, strictly accurate. For the Pentateuch contains predictive and moral matter, as well as the codes of civil and ceremonial law; and many of the Psalms are as prophetical of the Messiah (though more in the way of type) as the writings of the prophets themselves. The proper age of prophecy is from the time of Samuel to its expiration with Malachi, about 400 years before Christ. Like the Law, it was introductory to the Gospel, but after a different manner. What the Law by its discipline led the worshippers to feel and desire, what it shadowed out in type and symbol, prophecy in varying measure, announced in language which could be understood, and thus took the first step, as a distinct institute, towards accustoming the Jewish mind to a theocracy of the Word and

the Spirit instead of a visible theocracy. The question now before us is, Does prophecy, in its general teaching, follow the same *direction* as that which the Law took, considered as a school of discipline, viz., from the external and ritual side of religion to the inward and spiritual; or an opposite one, so as to bring back the Jew to the oldness of the letter? The answer is not doubtful.

In the words of a distinguished writer, prophecy 'is a step beyond the Law and preparatory to the Gospel. It is a step beyond the Law in the greater distinctness and fulness of some of its doctrines and precepts; it is a more perfect exposition of the principles of personal holiness and virtue; the sanctions of it have less of an exclusive reference to temporal promises, and incline more to evangelical; the ritual of the Law begins to be discountenanced by it; the superior value of the moral commandment to be enforced; and altogether it bears a more spiritual and instructive character than the original Law given by Moses.'[1] To the comprehensiveness of this statement nothing can be added, but it may be useful to illustrate it by a few instances. Moses, as a prophet, heads the list in predicting the dissolution of his own polity in the contingency (certain, as he remarks, to occur) of disobedience to the covenant of Sinai: 'I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter

[1] Davison on Prophecy, Disc. 2.

days, because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger.' And when the cup of their sin should be full, 'It shall come to pass that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good and to multiply you, so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from the land whither thou goest to possess it; and the Lord shall scatter thee among all people from the one end of the earth even unto the other.'[1] And yet he was commissioned to announce to the people that if, notwithstanding their repeated provocations, they should return to the Lord, and obey His voice with all their heart and soul, then the Lord would turn their captivity and have compassion upon them;[2] in other words, that national repentance would avail for forgiveness and restoration to national prosperity. This is the first distinct mention of the efficacy of repentance to procure forgiveness which we find in the Pentateuch; but the repentance supposed is national, not personal; as the sin is national, so is the remedy. Very different is the language of Isaiah on the same subject, and an important step in advance: 'Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.'[3] The interests of personal religion come more to the front.

The promises of God are now addressed not to the

[1] Deut. xxviii. 63; xxxi. 29. [2] Deut. xxx. 2. [3] Isa. lvii. 15

nation in its corporate capacity, but to the pious portion of it; the 7000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal, and yet were involved in the temporal calamities of later times. Such consolatory messages were, indeed, much needed. For even in Isaiah's time the first covenant was visibly drawing to a close; the main part of the nation had been dispossessed of its inheritance, while the remnant were in a very depressed condition. 'Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever: behold, see, we beseech Thee, we are all Thy people. Thy holy cities are a wilderness; Zion is a wilderness; Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste. Wilt Thou refrain Thyself for these things, O Lord? Wilt Thou hold Thy peace, and afflict us very sore?'[1] To these mourners in Zion, the true Israel, the prophet was commissioned to declare that, whatever might be the fate of the earthly Zion, they were still objects of the Divine care and compassion, as being interested in a better covenant and better promises than those given to their fathers. They were assured that the worship of the heart was alone of real estimation with God, and the Levitical ritual of inferior value. For the depreciation of this ritual is not less emphatic, but even more so, by the prophets than what we find in the Book of Psalms. 'I hate, I despise, your feast-days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt-offer-

[1] Isa. lxiv. 9–12.

ings and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them: take thou away from me the noise of thy songs. . . . But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.'[1] 'To *this man* will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit.'[2]

Concurrently with this enforcement of moral obedience, the prophetical revelation disclosed fuller and clearer notices of the capital doctrines of the Gospel. There was a simultaneous advance in the two lines of practice and doctrine. The indistinct promise of a deliverer from the effects of the Fall[3] had become, when Isaiah wrote, expanded into a variety of particulars. The nation, tribe, and family from which Messiah was to descend had been specified, and in the prophetic Psalms His Divine nature, His glory, the wide extent of His kingdom, His eternal priesthood, and His sufferings, had been delineated. One question, however, had been left unanswered, viz., in what manner these sufferings were to avail to the recovery of mankind. It was reserved for Isaiah to declare their vicarious efficacy: 'He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. . . . The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all. . . . He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.'[4] In proportion, too, as the Redeemer, in His person and offices, was revealed to the eye of faith, that eternal life which had been forfeited by Adam's sin appeared above

[1] Amos v. 21–24; comp. Isa. i. 11–16.
[2] Isa. lxvi. 1–2.
[3] Gen. iii. 15.
[4] Isa. liii. 5–6, 12.

the prophetic horizon. The Pentateuch is silent on the subject, and the well-known passage in the Book of Job is too uncertain, as regards its interpretation, to be of much use. The ancient believers walked in comparative darkness respecting a future state, and still greater as regards the resurrection of the body.

Paley is justified in his remark that not until Christ Himself set the question at rest did the popular belief amount to more than a strong persuasion—'Had Jesus Christ delivered no other declaration than the following: "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation," He had pronounced a message of inestimable importance, and well worthy of that splendid apparatus of prophecy and miracles with which His mission was introduced and attested; a message in which the wisest of mankind would rejoice to find an answer to their doubts and rest to their inquiries. It is idle to say that a future state had been discovered already; it had been discovered as the Copernican system was—it was one guess among many. He alone discovers who proves; and no man can prove this point but the teacher who testifies by miracles that his doctrine comes from God.'[1]

But it is when the prophets describe the new covenant itself, which lay yet in the womb of time, that they soar to their highest flights. It was to be

[1] Mor. and Pol. Phil., Bk. v. c. 9.

an era of light and truth as contrasted with the preceding one of shadow and type; the glory of the Lord was to be revealed, and to the cities of Judah it should be said, 'Behold your God!' It was to be signalised by an extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit, in both His ordinary and extraordinary gifts. One capital prophecy sums up the whole: 'Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband to them, saith the Lord; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.'[1] Here is predicted not merely a modification of the old covenant, whereby it was to be fitted for a universal religion, but one of an entirely different character. The former was national, this should be personal; the former was written on stones, this on 'the fleshy tables of the heart.'[2] Divine knowledge should not be the privilege of a caste, for they should 'be all taught of God';[3] and this spiritual

[1] Jer. xxxi. 31–34. [2] 2 Cor. iii. 3. [3] John vi. 45.

economy was to be founded on a full and sufficient atonement for sins, which were to be remembered no more, because it was sufficient. The chrysalis was preparing to burst its shell, and to expand its wings in the light and glory of the Sun of righteousness Himself.

3. The lapse of a few centuries from the last of the prophets brings us to the next great epoch in the history of revelation—the appearance of the immediate forerunner of Christ, and of Christ Himself on the stage of human affairs. For the purposes of the present inquiry, the ministry of John the Baptist and that of our Lord may be considered as one, and that the concluding one of the dispensations which were to be introductory to the Gospel. By the ministry of our Lord is here meant His teaching; not the work of atonement which He came to accomplish, nor the perfect example of moral obedience which He left behind to His Church, nor the offices which He now discharges; the exposition of these facts belongs to the final portion of revelation as we have it in the written Word; but His teaching as a branch of prophecy in its didactic aspect. 'The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken.' [1]

The state of religion among the Jews when Christ and His forerunner appeared may be gathered from the notices we find of it in the Gospel history. The calamities which their breaches of the law had brought

[1] Deut. xviii. 15.

down upon them had at length wrought their intended effect; and after the Babylonish captivity they were as much distinguished by their abstinence from idolatry as their forefathers had been by their proneness to that sin. But this improvement in the national sentiment was accompanied with other less favourable characteristics. The deeper its political degradation, the more did the nation cling to its religious prerogatives; and consoled itself under the yoke of its temporal conquerors with the prospect, not of the new covenant which Jeremiah had predicted, but of an era when they who were trampling Zion under foot should approach her as suppliants and acknowledge the universal sway of Messiah. Or where these gross conceptions were not entertained, as in Alexandrine Judaism, it was still anticipated that the Law, with its interpretation by Jewish sages, would effect a spiritual conquest over the world, and prophesy thus receive its fulfilment.[1] It was at this period of their history that the vindictive contempt of other peoples, which so attracted the notice of heathen historians, began to display itself. In the sect of the Pharisees this sentiment found its chief exponent. With them religion had once more become a matter of law and external precept; the letter stifled the spirit; positive enactments superseded moral duties, and a ceremonial worship took the place of inward communion of the heart with God. Worse than that, the legalism of

[1] 'It is the destiny of the Jews to be the prophets and priests of mankind.'—Philo, quoted by Neander, C. H., vol. i., Part I.

the Pharisees was of a more onerous character than the Mosaic institute itself, for to this they added a multitude of traditionary observances, placing them on a level with the Divine commands, and thereby evading the precepts of the moral code. Yet, withal, they showed great zeal for their religion, compassing sea and earth to make proselytes, but they were content with outward circumcision in the flesh, and indifferent to circumcision of the heart.[1] As to the Sadducees, the case was worse; for indifferentism is less receptive of the Gospel than even misguided zeal. They occupy comparatively an insignificant place in the Gospel narrative. No wonder that the appearance and preaching of the Baptist produced a great sensation. He came 'in the spirit and power of Elias,' earnest and austere as that great prophet was. The kingdom of heaven was indeed at hand, but there was no entrance into it except by repentance. Without repentance carnal descent from Abraham availed nothing; the axe was laid at the root of every tree, and such as did not abide the trial were to be rejected. The baptism of water pointed to the baptism of the Holy Ghost;[2] it was a baptism of repentance 'unto the remission of sins,' not as conferring that blessing, but as symbolising what was necessary to its reception.[3]

[1] Matt. xxiii. 14–15.

[2] 'John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.'—Acts i. 5.

[3] 'Nam quod prædicabat baptismum pœnitentiæ in remissionem delictorum, in futuram remissionem enuntiatum est.'—Tertull. de Bapt., s. 10.

He thus restored the tenor of prophetical teaching, which had been interrupted, and the republication of which was then emphatically needed. But he was only a forerunner; among those who lived under the legal covenant, no greater than he had arisen, but he that is least in the kingdom of heaven should be greater still. It was his privilege to behold with the eye of sense what his predecessors had beheld only in spirit, 'the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,' and to close the prophetical revelation of the Old Testament with the announcement which brings us to the very threshold of the New, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;'[1] but there his commission ended.

The lesser luminary speedily disappeared, to make way for the greater. The first notice we have of our Lord's ministry connects it immediately with that of the Baptist, and is described in the same terms: 'From that time' (the time of John's imprisonment) 'Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'[2] In this, its negative aspect, the teaching of Christ was identical with that of his forerunner. Like the Baptist, He insisted on a change of heart as the condition of membership in His kingdom; like him, He unveiled the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, and impressed on His hearers the worthlessness of a ceremonial religion apart from spiritual renewal. He released the conscience from the yoke of traditionary observances of human origin

[1] John iii. 36.

[2] Matt. iv. 17.

and stimulated it by unfolding the full extent and spirituality of the Divine law. These are confessedly the leading features of our Lord's moral teaching, so far as it was opposed to the formalism of the age; and in this light it appears as the summing up of all that the prophets had inculcated. But the Council of Trent bids us, under pain of an anathema, acknowledge that Christ came not only as a Redeemer, but also as a Legislator.[1] Whence the anxiety arose to invest Him with this office will be more plainly seen in the following chapter, in which the actual founding of the Christian Church comes under consideration.

Meanwhile, as a matter of fact, Christ was not a lawgiver in the sense in which Moses was, and the sense intended by the Council. He did expound the law to His hearers, but it was the ancient law given at Sinai. He added nothing to that law, but only freed it from the glosses and perversions of the Pharisees, and more fully unfolded its inner spirit. Far from abrogating or altering any portion of it in favour of a new law of His own, He declares, 'I am not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil.'[2] The Sermon on the Mount, which is more like a legal code than any other of Christ's discourses,

[1] 'Si quis dixerit Christum Jesum a deo hominibus datum fuisse ut redemptorem cui fidant, non etiam ut Legislatorem cui obediant; Anathema sit.'—De Justif., Can. 21.

[2] Matt. v. 17. 'Certum hoc est Christum in ministerio prædicationis suæ non solum evangelium de gratuita peccatorum remissione, sed etiam legem auditoribus suis proposuisse, eandem a corruptelis pharisaicis vindicasse et pristino nitori restituisse . . . verum de eo non quærunt pontifices quando Christum legislatorem fuisse pugnant, sed ideo et

is not so in reality. It did not take the place of the Law inscribed on tables of stone;[1] it adopts it, but enlarges its scope. More than that, the discourse presumes that they who are addressed in it are already subjects of Divine grace. To pronounce a blessing on the 'poor in spirit,' those 'that mourn,' those that 'hunger and thirst after righteousness,' is to set forth the efficacy of repentance and a contrite heart, which is the gift of God. To direct the disciples to approach God as their Heavenly Father, to implore forgiveness of their sins and spiritual strength against temptation, to rely on His providence for the supply of their temporal necessities, presumes that they were previously reconciled to Him through faith in His Son. The discourse, therefore, is intended for Christians; and both it and the Lord's Prayer are prospective in character, that is, look forward to a state of things which, though essentially present in the disciples, did not at the time exist in its full development. Had Christ come to establish a 'new law,' He would have delivered to His followers an elaborate system of rites and observances, and a graduated hierarchy, a ceremonial law analogous to that given at Sinai. It is not on the authority of Scripture that such a pro-

hoc respectu id nominis ipsi competere statuunt quod novas quasdam leges promulgaverit, ac legem Mosaicam perfectiorem reddiderit.'—J. Gerb. Loc. xiv. 64.

[1] 'If the two tables of stone which contained the Law are destroyed, yet the Sermon on the Mount takes their place; if though Moses is gone, Christ is come,' &c —Newman, Sermons, vol. iv. s. 18 The passage, written before the author joined the Church of Rome, is worthy of perusal, as illustrating the affinities of systems of doctrine.

ceeding is attributed to Him. A ceremonial law finds no place in the first promulgation of Christianity. The only two ordinances which Christ did appoint rest, as will be shown hereafter, on very different grounds from those of the elder dispensation. He delivered no form of polity for his Church; or, if he had one in view, it was the synagogical,[1] no new form, but an old and familiar one.

The real character in which Christ appeared was that of a Rabbi or teacher, an office which had no necessary connection with the Levitical ritual. He selects disciples (learners) to be instructed, not subjects to be ruled save spiritually. A ministry of the Word was inaugurated, to be afterwards a vehicle for the ministration of the Spirit. He was a preacher of His own spiritual kingdom; He invites to Himself the weary and heavy-laden: He promises everlasting life to those who accept the invitation. No one comes to Him unless by the Father's drawing, but every one who has heard and learned of the Father does come to Him. Hence the emphasis which he lays on faith as the condition of the exercise of His Divine power, whether the case were a bodily or a spiritual one. For faith and the Word are correlative terms; and so, simultaneously with the installation of the Word as the instrument of the Spirit, faith was constituted the essential link between the sinner and Christ; and this at a time when faith could not mean assent of the understanding to doctrines, but trust in a person. 'What shall we do that

[1] Matt. xviii. 17.

we might work the works of God?' The question expresses the spirit of the old covenant; the answer that of the new: 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.'[1] The inner theocracy of the Spirit, about to be introduced, demanded a comparatively spiritual instrument of its operation; and such is the Word as compared with the legal system of Moses. 'Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, teaching them,' &c. All true disciples 'shall be taught of God.' The Jew too had the Word of God, but not as a standing ordinance and means of grace; only as it was delivered to him, from time to time, by the prophets, and intermitted for long periods. Under the Christian economy the worship is spiritual, not typical or symbolical; and its vehicle is of the same nature. Now the point to be noticed is, that the approaching change was inaugurated by Christ Himself. His was a ministry of teaching, not of ceremonial, as was also that of His immediate followers and assistants, the twelve and the seventy who were sent forth by Him to 'preach the kingdom of God.'[2] The ministration of the Word became a standing ordinance of the religion which the Saviour came to introduce.

[1] John vi. 28–29.

[2] Luke ix. 2.

CHAPTER IV

FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

It has already been observed that, far from intending to establish a mere invisible fellowship of the Spirit, our Lord contemplated His followers as collected into a society, or rather into societies, bound together by the profession of the same Lord, the same faith, the same baptism, and in intercommunion with each other, but otherwise distinct communities. 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst;' in those words we have the rudiments of Christian worship. 'Tell it to the Church,' the local Christian body with which you are connected;—this presupposes an organised society with officers and representatives. After His resurrection He conversed with the Apostles on matters 'pertaining to the kingdom of God,'[1] but what they were is not recorded. The only injunction which He did give them was not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the fulfilment of the promise which they had heard of Him—the promise of the Holy Ghost who should take His place.[2] On the day of Pentecost, the birthday of the Church, the promise was fulfilled. The Holy Ghost came down upon

[1] Acts i. 3.

[2] Acts i. 4

them with visible signs, and enabled them to deliver to the Jews, assembled at Jerusalem, to each in his own tongue the message of salvation. There was the Church, in the first moment of its existence, and *before it was anything else*; and what was it? Simply a company of men filled with the Holy Ghost. Here was no new institution, no visible organisation, no ritual prescribed save the baptismal profession of faith in Jesus as the promised Messiah. The preacher (Peter) was himself a Jew, and strongly affected with Jewish prejudices; so were his fellow-apostles; the persons addressed were Jews; and the idea that embracing the Christian faith involved any visible separation of themselves from the divinely-appointed institutions of Moses would have been most deterrent to one and all. Nor was such a topic introduced into Peter's sermon, nor ever subsequently approached. 'Repent and be baptized . . . for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' As many as did repent, and were willing to prove their sincerity by being baptized, were added to the Church of the saved, the Church already in existence, the Church which had been constituted by the descent of the Spirit. And this was the Lord's usual mode of proceeding; it was thus that the Church increased daily.

By the Word preached, accompanied by the Holy Spirit's power, dead souls were quickened; they repented of their sins; they frequented the teaching of the Apostles, as was only natural;[1] they 'broke bread'

[1] Acts ii. 42. See remarks in Note, p. 59, on this verse.

from house to house; they continued in prayer. But where was the institution, with supernatural authority and powers, in which these converts were to enrol themselves, in order through it to gain a right to the privileges of the new covenant? One such establishment was before their eyes—the Jewish theocracy; but they already belonged to that, and the Apostles made no attempt to induce them to leave it, nor did it, at the time, give any signs of its impending dissolution. The first converts were looked upon by their fellow-countrymen as one of the numerous sects which sprang up in the later ages of Jewish history, which were distinguished by their private opinions and observances, but were never considered as aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. The sensible Gamaliel, referring to former instances of fanatical movement, with which he probably classed the Christian, advised his fellow-counsellors to let the matter die a natural death. Would he have done so if the infant Church had assumed the form of a second theocracy, the first one still standing? Assuredly not. There is much truth in the remark that 'Christianity came into the world as an idea rather than as an institution';[1] only for the word 'idea' we must substitute the presence of Christ by His Spirit in the hearts of believers.

Christianity did come into the world much more as a spiritual power than as a visible polity, and still more so than as a training institution, working, like the Mosaic law, from without inwards. When the writer

[1] Newman, 'Develop.,' p. 116.

just mentioned tells us that 'Catholic Christendom (that is the Church) is a vast assemblage of human beings with wilful intellects and wild passions, brought together into one by the beauty and the majesty of a superhuman power—into what may be called a large ref·rmatory or training school, not to be sent to bed, nor to be buried alive, but for the melting, refining, and moulding, as in some moral factory, by an incessant noisy process (if I may proceed to another metaphor) of the raw material of human nature, so excellent, so dangerous, so capable of Divine purposes;'[1] he presents us with a conception of the Church which finds no warrant in Scripture, though it does an ample one in the writers of the Communion which he joined. As we read in Scripture, human nature, unregenerate and unrenewed, is not put into the Church to be fashioned by a spiritual mechanism into the image of God, the instruments of incorporation being the Sacraments; but the Church itself consists of those who had been spiritually quickened, through the ministration, no doubt, of the Church as the holder forth of the Word of life, but antecedently to Sacramental union, 'The Lord added to the Church the saved'; saved by their repentance and faith in the Redeemer. The 'moral factory' is that of the Spirit of God; His instrument is the Word of life; His mode of operation not noisy, but gentle and hidden, 'a well of water springing up into everlasting life.' Is it not so? Let Acts ii. be again perused. What was the Church in the first

[1] 'Apologia,' p. 391.

moment of its existence? No answer can be given except, 'a company of men filled with the Holy Ghost.' No organisation as yet appears; deacons, presbyters, bishops, belong to the future.[1] Creeds and Eucharistic liturgies are yet in the distance; directions how Divine worship is to be conducted or the Eucharist to be celebrated do not appear. Believers, indeed, are to be baptized; baptized Christians are to eat the bread and drink the wine; thus much is told us, and not much more. Shall we say that the Church was imperfect prior to these external developments? or that there was no Church until episcopacy was established? Christ Himself seems to have decided that question, for the Church to which He added the saved exhibited nothing as its specific difference but repentance, faith, baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity, the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and the gifts of the Spirit, ordinary and extraordinary. And what constituted its essential being in the first moment of its existence will remain such till the end of time. Whatever developments its external system might lawfully admit of—and they were many and important from an early date—neither the addition nor the removal of such things affects the true being of the Church. They have no independent value in themselves; their value consists in their being legitimate manifestations of the life

[1] The Church of Rome teaches otherwise. Not only the three Orders, but seven, we are told, are found in Acts ii.: 'Ab ipso ecclesiæ initio sequentium ordinum nomina, atque uniuscujusque eorum propria ministeria, subdiaconi, acolythi, exorcistæ, lectoris, et ostiarii, in usu fuisse cognoscuntur.'—Conc. Trid., Sess. 23, c. 2.

within. The Church did without them, until the need of further organisation made itself felt, and it was no less the Church because it did do without them. That the future polity of the Church was implicitly involved in the Apostolic office has been asserted, but Scripture contains no hint of it. The Apostles presided over the infant community; they were inspired founders of the Church; they were chosen witnesses of the resurrection of Christ; but such they are to us, and so they will be to the Church to the end of time. They still discharge their Apostolic office in the written Word, but as founders of an institution they do not appear. Yet the Church was intended to be visible, and to have an external organisation, and to have Sacraments; and the purpose of the present chapter is to examine the facts of the inspired history as regards these two elements of visibility—Polity and Sacraments, and the relation in which they stand to the Church; and then to make some remarks on the structure of the Apostolical Epistles addressed to local Churches.

1. That the Apostles, without an express command of their Master to that effect, never could have thought of organising the Christian Church after the pattern of the temple and its ritual, stands to reason; and that they never did so is matter of fact. As long as the Temple stood, no Jew instructed in the principles of his religion could have dreamt of setting up any counterpart of it even in heathen lands, much less in close proximity to the sacred structure. It was a fixed maxim with this people that the Levitical ritual

was to be confined to one spot, viz., Jerusalem; there alone, according to the law, God was to be approached with sacrifice, and through the priesthood. When Onias, driven from Judæa, and disappointed in his hope of succeeding to the priesthood, persuaded Ptolemy (180–145 B.C.) to permit the erection of a temple at Leontopolis in Egypt, his greatest difficulty, as Prideaux observes, was to reconcile the Jews to this project, since they believed it sin to sacrifice to God anywhere but upon the altar at Jerusalem. Nothing but a special revelation from heaven that the temple services were no longer to be confined to Jerusalem, or some providential catastrophe rendering those services impossible, could have overcome these objections. Such a catastrophe did indeed, occur, viz., the destruction of the Temple, A.D. 70, by which Christianity was released to pursue its independent career; but at this time the elements of Christian worship were firmly established throughout the world. In the interval the Jewish Christians still considered themselves members of the theocracy, and it is an important fact that the transition from Judaism to Christianity, as a distinct form of religion, was a gradual one. The Apostles frequented the Temple at the appointed hours of prayer.[1] St. Paul 'hasted, if it were possible for him to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.'[2] At Cenchrea he had shorn his head because he had a vow.[3] His brother Apostle James recommended to him this compliance with the law, in order to silence his accusers, who had

[1] Acts iii. 1. [2] Acts xx. 16. [3] Acts xviii. 18.

charged him with disregard of the law.[1] He added likewise, for St. Paul's information, that there were many thousands of believing Jews who 'were all zealous of the law,'[2] and he mentions it without any mark of disapprobation. With truth could Paul challenge his opponents to gainsay his statement, that 'neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple had he offended anything at all.'[3] In fact, to have attempted the framing of Church polity on the model of the Mosaic institute would have placed the new sect, as it was called, in direct opposition to the existing economy, and seriously impeded the progress of the Gospel. But, further, there was no *need* of any such proceeding, for concurrently with the divinely-appointed legal institute there had, long before the coming of Christ, grown up another, *not* of Divine appointment, but unquestionably under Divine Providence destined to be the cradle of the polity of the Christian Church, viz., the synagogue. So important is this circumstance that it may be permitted to dwell at some length upon it.

To what extent any system of regular religious instruction prevailed in the earlier ages of the Jewish commonwealth cannot be exactly determined. Moses enjoined that the Law should be read in the hearing of the people every seventh year at the feast of tabernacles,[4] and that its meaning in doubtful cases should be sought at the mouth of the priests and Levites;[5]

[1] Acts xxi. 24 [2] Acts xxi. 20. [3] Acts xxv. 8.
[4] Deut. xxxi. 10–11. [5] Deut. xvii. 8-9.

and the Levites were dispersed throughout the land, doubtless, among other reasons, for the discharge of this duty. But it seems probable that in the disordered state of public affairs under the Judges and many of the Kings these provisions for public instruction fell into abeyance. That gross ignorance sometimes prevailed may be gathered from the surprise of Hilkiah, the high-priest, at the discovery of the Book of the Law, and the consternation of Josiah at hearing its contents.[1] Such a state of things is obviously incompatible with the supposition of its being at that time the practice to come together for the purpose of hearing the Law read and expounded. To the Synagogue, therefore, properly so called, we cannot assign a higher antiquity than the Babylonish captivity; and this event sufficiently accounts for the rise of the institution. The exiles by the waters of Babylon, deprived of the temple services, endeavoured to repair the loss by such religious exercises as still remained within their reach. They prayed with their face towards Jerusalem; they came together as opportunity offered to hear at the mouth of a prophet words of instruction and consolation. More than once in the Book of Ezekiel we find mention of such assemblies, presided over by the prophet himself, and consisting sometimes of the elders alone, and sometimes of people and elders together.[2] Restored to their native land, the Jews continued these weekly assemblies, the homiletic services of which would be the more valued when

[1] 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14–19.

[2] Ezek. xiv. 1; xx. 1; xxxiii. 31.

the gift of prophecy was withdrawn. In the Book of Nehemiah we have an account of a religious service which presents a close resemblance to what afterwards became the stated worship of the synagogue. Ezra the scribe ascended a pulpit of wood, read portions of Scripture which (since the ancient Hebrew was no longer understood by the people) were interpreted by persons appointed for the purpose, and the whole concluded with prayer and thanksgiving. The dispersion of the Jews after the Captivity produced a corresponding diffusion of the new mode of worship. At the feast of Pentecost, when the Church was constituted, there were found in Jerusalem 'Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven,' who, by these stated attendances at the principal festivals, maintained their connection with the temple, while in the particular localities in which they resided they were fain to content themselves with the simpler devotions of the synagogue. And thus in every considerable city of the Roman empire Jews and Jewish synagogues were, at the time of Christ, found established. In Judæa itself the number of these places of worship was very great.[1] From its history the nature of the synagogical worship may be gathered. The synagogue was not properly one of the Mosaic institutions, and could lay no claim to a Divine origin, save in so far as all the changes which befell the Jewish people are referable to a special providence. With the temple and its ritual it had no immediate connection; a priest, as such, had

[1] Vitringa, De Syn. Vet., i. p. 2, c. 12. (*Cf.* Bernard's Abridgment, p. 10.)

no function to discharge there. He was not, indeed, debarred from officiating, but no preference was shown him, save that he was ordinarily called upon to pronounce the solemn benediction at the close of the meeting. With respect to those who might teach and expound, a considerable degree of liberty prevailed. While this office properly belonged to the rulers of the synagogue, and could not be exercised without their permission, it was commonly delegated by them to any qualified member of the assembly who might intimate his wish to discharge it. Thus it excited no surprise when our Lord in the synagogue at Nazareth 'stood up for to read;'[1] the book was delivered to Him, in His character of Rabbi, as a matter of course; and we read that thus, without hindrance, 'He preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee.'[2] So it was with the Apostles. When Paul and Barnabas entered the synagogue in Pisidia and took their seats on the doctors' bench, the rulers sent to them, who probably were strangers, a permissive message, 'if they had any word of exhortation for the people,' to 'say on.'[3]

The form of government which prevailed in the synagogue was not everywhere the same. In the more populous cities it was framed on the Presbyterian model, a college or senate of persons being invested with the chief authority; while in the smaller villages, where there were not learned men in sufficient number to form such a senate, the synagogue was placed under the presidency of a single Doctor of the Law. Hence

[1] Luke iv. 16. [2] Mark i. 39. [3] Acts xiii. 14–15.

may be reconciled the varying statements of Scripture, which sometimes speak of the rulers, and sometimes of the ruler, of the synagogue'; in the one case a corporate governing body being apparently meant, in the other an individual holding the same office.[1] The proper Jewish title of the presiding members was 'elders,' and the duties appertaining to their office were to teach and rule; the latter comprehending the regulation of public worship, the care of the poor, and the exercise of discipline. Besides its elders, the synagogue had its inferior ministers, upon whom devolved the care of the sacred books and other subordinate offices: of this order was the 'minister' to whom our Lord, on the occasion referred to, returned the Book of Isaiah, from which He had been reading, to be deposited in its place.

Such is a brief sketch of the origin and nature of the Jewish synagogue, an institution which had, in the lapse of ages, established itself wherever there were Jews, that is, everywhere, and the design of which was both to facilitate the progress of the Gospel and to prepare the way for the founding of the Christian Church. And perhaps there is no circumstance in the history of the Jews more strongly indicative of a superintending Providence than this one. Christianity, instead of being, like Judaism, confined to a particular locality, was to embrace all men within its pale; but if

[1] There is, however, but one passage (Luke xiii. 14) in which a single 'Αρχισυνάγωγος is mentioned. The ordinary form of government was a Presbytery.

the Jews had not in their dispersed state formed themselves into synagogues, there would have existed no religious centres to which the promulgation of the Gospel could have attached itself, as the Apostles, in the exercise of their mission, traversed the world. For the temple and the temple services were incapable of multiplication, but in the synagogue exactly what was wanting was supplied. These places of worship could be multiplied indefinitely without affecting the unity of the temple or the connection of the worshippers therewith; by them the knowledge of the Law and the Prophets was maintained amidst the corrupting influences of heathenism; by them the Jewish mind became habituated to the offerings of prayer and praise instead of the legal sacrifices, and to the ministry of the Word instead of a ministry of types. Thus, on their arrival at any new scene of labour, the missionaries of Christ, themselves Jews, had but to repair to the synagogue, and, as far as regards external facilities, they found everything prepared for the exercise of their mission.

That the government of the Church, in its earlier stages at least, followed that of the synagogue admits of no reasonable doubt. The two inferior orders of the Christian ministry were derived from the latter institution. The diaconate, the first step in organisation, was an office which, both in name and function, bore a resemblance to a well-known one in the synagogue.[1] Whether the so-called seven deacons of Acts vi. were

[1] The chazzan or ὑπηρέτης. Vitringa, lib. iii. p. 2, c. 4. (Bernard's Abridgment, pp. 187–192.)

formally the same as those of later times is immaterial; substantially the deacons of St. Paul's epistles and of Church history correspond to them. Vitringa,[1] indeed, is of another opinion, arguing that their office was an extraordinary one. Stephen and Philip, it is true, play a more important part in the history of the early Church than that which we usually associate with the name of deacon; but distinctions of order were not at the time strongly marked, and these men are said to have been specially 'full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.' Such personal qualities would not be transmissible, but the duty they had to perform of distributing alms to the poor is of a permanent nature. Once established, the office drew to itself other duties, but in later ages it lost somewhat of its original dignity. The deacons attended to the poor and sick, but their chief employment was to assist the bishop in the details of public worship, to look after the vestments, to select portions of Scripture to be read, to assist at the distribution of the elements, to convey them to those who, through bodily infirmity, could not be present at the celebration, and generally to see that all things were done decently and in order. The similarity between such offices and those of the chazzanim, or inferior ministers of the synagogue, is obvious.[2] It has, indeed, been objected that the analogy fails because each synagogue, as a rule, had

[1] Lib. iii. p. 2, c. 5.

[2] Although the first deacons are never afterwards so called in the Book of Acts, but always 'the seven,' the name is implied in *διακονίᾳ τῇ καθημερινῇ*, and *διακονεῖν τραπέζαις*, Acts vi. 1–2.

only one chazzan;[1] but this is not certain. The number appears to have varied according to the size and importance of the synagogue; and Vitringa quotes a passage which speaks of two,[2] and his inference is just, that if there were two, there might have been more. But whatever uncertainty may rest on the derivation of the diaconate, none such belongs to the next order of ministers, the presbyters, first mentioned in Acts xi. 30. From what other source but the synagogue could the Apostles, all Jews, have borrowed it? There were no presbyters or elders officially connected with the temple. The duties of Christian presbyters, as described by St. Paul in 1 Tim. v. 17 correspond exactly to those of the Jewish elders, only that labouring 'in the Word and doctrine' is particularly commended. We may suppose, in fact, that what took place on a certain occasion is a fair example of the formation of a Christian society. When St. Paul arrived at Corinth, he repaired, as usual, to the synagogue, and claiming his right to speak, he endeavoured to convince his hearers that Jesus was the Christ. When he found the majority inaccessible to argument, he separated the believing Jews from their unbelieving brethren, and, with the Gentiles who believed, formed them into a Christian synagogue, retaining as far as possible the features of the elder institution.[3] The celebration of the Lord's Supper was what constituted the main distinction. It so happens that in 1 Cor. xiv. we have an account of what the worship

[1] Lightfoot, Phil. [2] Lib. iii. p. 2, c. 23 (Bernard's Abridgment, p. 90).
[3] Acts xviii. 6–8

of this infant community was. Prayer, psalmody, and Christian instruction alone are mentioned as parts of it. No sacrifice was offered; no priest, as such, officiated. The extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, which that Church enjoyed in abundance, are all connected with the ministration of the Word. Every gift which proved itself to be from above was permitted to exercise itself, with the one provision that things were to be done decently and in order, and the one limitation that 'women were to keep silence in the churches.' This Christian synagogue was the nucleus of the Corinthian Church, but only the nucleus. As time went on, and the Church grew in numbers, other regulations became necessary. After the destruction of the temple, A.D. 70, Christianity began, as regards external organisation, to crystallise itself independently, but not until a much later period did the Church lose sight of its synagogical parentage.

So far the lawgiver does not appear; nor does a visible institution, new to the Jews and to the world, descend from heaven, and demand, as a condition of covenanted grace, incorporation in itself. The synagogue was not new; the Old Testament Scriptures expounded in it were not new; the mode of worship was not (substantially) new. What then was new? Nothing (with the exception of the two sacraments) but the presence of Christ by His Spirit, the life and essential being of the Church. This is what informed the Jewish synagogical worship with new light and

glory; newness of the Spirit, not of the letter nor of the external framework. The theory that either Christ or His Apostles delivered a new ecclesiastical institution to the world is shown to be untenable from the whole history of the Apostolic Church.

But we are admonished, if we would ascertain the real nature of an institution, to examine it in its fully-developed state, and not in its 'origins.' Does not Aristotle tell us that what a thing becomes when it is grown indicates what it really is?[1] Let us then transport ourselves in imagination to the fifth century, and how different indeed is the spectacle which we behold. We see an organised episcopacy extending over the whole of Christendom, each bishop being at once the chief pastor of his own Church and the instrument of union between it and all other Churches; this episcopate is itself united and consolidated by the appointment first of metropolitans, then of patriarchs. The primitive upper chamber has given place to imposing structures; if we enter which, there will meet our eye, first, in the outer vestibule, the catechumens and penitents; then, in the nave, the faithful, to whom alone access to the Lord's table was permitted; and at the upper end, divided by the chancel rails from the rest of the congregation, the bishop with his presbyters. Formal liturgies lead the devotions of the people, and carefully-worded Creeds test the orthodoxy of candidates for baptism and of suspected heretics. In what light are we to regard these additions

[1] Gore, "Ministry," Pref. to 3rd edit.

to the simple polity and worship of the first Christian Church? As Divine appointments or as corruptions, the offspring of superstition and priestcraft? We must make a distinction; for, in truth, neither the one nor the other can be said of them in the mass. The Church of the fifth century is no longer the first Apostolical Church, with inspired Apostles presiding over its affairs. This was not the method intended by the Divine Head of the Church in perpetuity; but it might have remained Apostolical in spirit, and yet have grown to what it was by a process of natural development. It had practically the Canon of the written Word taking the Apostles' place, to guide it as to what alterations might be permissible, and what not, in visible organisation. That Word left much to the discretion of the Church in such matters. Christians in it are regarded as no longer needing a law regulating from without the religious life, but as the temples of the Holy Ghost, in His various gifts of spiritual wisdom and discernment, an inward teacher and vicar of Christ. They had the promise of the perpetual presence of the Saviour in and by the Holy Ghost, and further, that united prayer in His name for spiritual guidance would never be in vain. We too as Christians enjoy the same privileges and the same assistance; we have the Word, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, access to the throne of grace. We are competent, therefore, when history presents us with the Church, developed indeed but not infallible, to examine and to determine whether the growth has been in a legitimate

direction, and whether we can at once draw conclusions from what we find to what the Apostles intended should be. Such an examination will show that in some particulars of its growth the Church of the fifth century had lamentably declined from the doctrines of its Apostolic founders. By no natural process of evolution could the synagogical model of the Apostolic Church have grown into a hierarchy such as Cyprian would have it, of high-priest, priests, and Levites, after the Jewish type. By no such process could the Eucharist have come to be considered, as it distinctly was by Cyprian and Augustine, as an unbloody sacrifice of Christ, to be repeated from time to time.[1] The authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews is uncertain, but the book is in the Canon; could any ingenuity have extracted these doctrines from the writer's reasoning? So far as they and others connected with them are concerned, we must reverse the judgment of Aristotle, and affirm that, in these particulars, at least, the real nature of the thing is *not* to be inferred from what it became when grown. Nevertheless, this cannot be said of all the external developments of the period in question. Some of them were in advance of Apostolic precedent or usages, but it was a legitimate advance. They were the result of the natural, necessary, and so far salutary efforts of the new religion to adapt itself to changing circumstances. For example, when a mixed multitude began to crowd into the sacred en-

[1] See the citations from both these eminent Fathers in chap. i. of the present volume.

closure, it became necessary to make distinctions and erect barriers; to sever inquirers from catechumens, catechumens from baptized Christians, the lapsed from the steadfast; and especially to guard the Eucharist from profanation. When false spirits and false prophets made themselves heard in Christian assemblies, it was no longer safe to trust the exercises of public worship to unpremeditated efforts; hence it was needful that forms of prayer embodying sound doctrine should be used in public. Heresies one after another made their appearance; to meet the shifting aspects of error, Creeds more and more precise were framed. When tribes of undisciplined barbarians became nominally Christians, the reins of authority had to be tightened, and the episcopate assumed a new aspect. Who can deny that, to a great extent in an Apostolical spirit and with wisdom, the Church adapted her system, from time to time, to the various changes, social and political, which time had brought about? But the new regulations did not proceed from without, as a matter of Divine appointment, but from the inner life of the Church itself.

The Christian society followed the law of all societies which have their true being within; it developed itself from within outwards. Instead of passively receiving a superinduced stamp, it threw itself out, by force of the Spirit within, into suitable organic forms. The Apostolic procedure was to allow the want of additional organisation to be felt before it was supplied. Deacons were needed, and they were appointed;

presbyters were needed, and they were appointed; episcopacy became desirable, and the Church gave it to herself, probably under the sanction of the last survivor of the Apostles, St. John. As long as the simpler arrangements sufficed, they were suffered to remain; it was only when difficulties arose, or the spread of the Gospel rendered further organisation necessary, that the Apostles interfered to supply the defect. Not because there was Divine legislation in the case, or a covenanted grace divinely connected with them, did the post-Apostolical developments of the polity of the Church (so far as they were framed in an Apostolical spirit) proceed, but on common natural grounds of order and the love of unity inherent in Christianity. When the first warmth of spiritual feeling, by which the Church of the 120 was knit together as one man, began to subside, external regulations naturally and necessarily stepped in to supply its place; forms and organisation are the remedies which Nature provides for a diminution of the animating spirit: when effervescence ceases, crystallisation commences. But here was no 'moral factory' for the re-fashioning of human nature, no school of discipline for the refractory material,[1] no 'institution' the essential being

[1] 'The Church, as God's vicar upon earth, subjugates the whole energy of man which struggles against the will of God. By her inward discipline the will is once more enthroned supreme, and its energies united with the will of God. Obedience passes by little and little from deliberation and conscious effort to a ready and almost unconscious volition. We are brought under the discipline of childhood. And since to a law, if it is not to remain a dead letter, there must be added a living authority to enforce its provisions, God has constituted

of which lay in its outward form or forms. Traced back to its origin, and *before it is anything* else, the Christian Church is a company of men filled with the Holy Ghost; everything subsequent to this great fact is of another order and of another importance. If the future organisation of the Church was implicitly embodied in the persons of the Apostles, this marvellous incorporation did not pass from its depository into visible existence; the organisation took its rise from other sources, providentially at hand long before the coming of Christ, and specially adapted to impart to it, at its first starting, the features which were to remain its essential ones throughout its course.

Since it is doubtful whether diocesan Episcopacy, the next great step in Church organisation, appears within the limits of the New Testament, and therefore can be reckoned among the foundations of the Church, although it may be traced to a period almost adjoining that of the Apostles, the history of its rise and progress is postponed for the present. In the next chapter, on the attributes or predicates of the mystical body of Christ, and especially the section of it which deals with the unity of the Church, the subject will be resumed. If it should appear that Episcopacy followed the same law which governed preceding de-

an order' (the clergy) 'which shall bear rule over His people, and shall bring them under the yoke of obedience to Himself.'—Manning, "Unity of the Church," pp. 239;251. The writer was not then a Roman Catholic, but the passage is the more valuable as showing the tendency of the school to which he belonged. The beneficial effects mentioned are, in Scripture, ascribed not to the Church, but to the direct operation of the Holy Ghost.

velopments, viz., either appropriating what was well known and familiar, as in the case of the synagogue, to a new use, or adding new regulations in an Apostolical spirit as need required, we shall have additional evidence that the Church of Christ is not primarily an external institution, either as a school of discipline or as the depository of covenanted sacramental grace.

2. Two ritual ordinances, and two only, are recorded to have been appointed by Christ Himself—Baptism and the Lord's Supper. That they were intended to be of perpetual observance is the common faith of Christendom, and, in fact, they have never for any length of time, or in any large portion of the Church, been suffered to fall into abeyance. The administration of discipline—though it stands not in the same order of necessity—may also claim Christ for its Author (Matt. xviii. 15–19). With respect to Baptism and the Lord's Supper, then, it is to be observed that neither of these sacraments were, as regards their outward signs, new appointments, but were adopted from existing and familiar customs. 'Baptisms' (not baptism), that is, lustrations by water, the 'divers washings' of Heb. ix. 10, were in common use among the Jews, some enjoined by the Law, others not; the baptism of John, as a symbol of repentance, excited no surprise; the disciples of Christ baptized.[1] It

[1] The baptism of proselytes, often alleged to prove that the Jewish converts must have baptized their children, has not been in the text referred to, because, in truth, it is by no means certain that the practice existed in our Lord's time. In the Old Testament no rite is mentioned for the reception of Gentiles into the Jewish covenant but

was at the feast of the Passover, the principal one of the Jews, that Jesus took occasion to set apart two of its customary rites to be symbols of His body broken and blood shed. Wherein then lay the change (for some change must be supposed) by which the Jewish ordinances became Christian sacraments? Not in anything external, but in the fact that Christ connected the doctrine of the Trinity with one of them, and His remembrance, His presence (by the Spirit), His perfect atonement, with the other, and His command with both. Augustine's aphorism, 'Accedit verbum ad elementum et fit Sacramentum,' is here to the point; for it was, in fact, the accession of the Word, His presence and command, to the simple elements of water, bread, and wine, that made them signs and seals of the new covenant; just as the promise, 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I,' transformed a synagogue of Jewish converts into a Christian congregation. Moreover, to neither of the ordinances in question were appended those circumstantials of ritual which we find in the Mosaic system, and on an exact compliance with which the validity of those rites was suspended. Had

circumcision, to which sacrifice was afterwards added; nor does any other appear in the writings of Philo, Josephus, and the older Targumists. The first allusion to proselyte baptism appears to be that in the Gemara Babylon-Jebamoth, 46, 2, of which the date is uncertain. The practice does not distinctly appear till the fourth century. But the 'baptisms' of the Law, and the figurative language of prophecy (Isa. lii. 15; Ezek. xxxvi. 25), are sufficient to account for the question of the Pharisees, 'Why baptizest thou, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias?' (John i. 25).

our Lord intended the Sacraments to be of this nature, He would have appointed them accompanied with liturgical forms and details of administration; He would have committed them to a priestly caste, in whose hands alone they would be efficacious. All this, we know, Christ is said to have done,[1] but not on the authority of the Christian Scriptures. In the persons of the Apostles, not as Christian ministers, still less as priests, but as representatives of the true Church to the end of time, He instituted the memorial of His death and of the benefits which He thereby obtained for us.[2] Believers are to be baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity; baptized Christians are to eat the bread and drink the wine; thus much is told us and not much more. Who the proper persons are to baptize or to preside at the Lord's table, with what accompanying ceremonial, whether the elements are to be consecrated, and if so by whom and with what form of words—for a determination of such points as these we search the original record in vain. Is it, for example, of Divine or of human appointment that a believing deacon should not, and an unbelieving presbyter should, have power to consecrate the bread and wine? Not of Divine, but of human; and as long as this is recognized, as long as it is made a

[1] 'Itaque tradendum est solis sacerdotibus potestatem datam esse ut sacram Eucharistiam conficiant ac fidelibus distribuant.'—Cat. Trid., P. ii. c. 4, s 72.

[2] 'Οὐ μετ' ἐκείνων δὲ μόνον εἶπεν ἔσεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ μετὰ πάντων τῶν μετ' ἐκείνους πιστευόντων· οὐ γὰρ δὴ ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος οἱ Ἀπόστολοι μένειν ἔμελλον· ἀλλ' ὡς ἑνὶ σώματι διαλέγεται τοῖς πιστοῖς.'—Chrysostom on Matt. xxviii. 20.

matter of order, it stands on its own sufficient grounds. The case is essentially different when it is prescribed *jure divino*. 'There is no reason to establish the right of men without succession from the Apostles to administer the Holy Eucharist which will not justify the taking away the cup from the laity.'[1] Did the writer of these words find his theory in Scripture, or introduce into the sacred page what belongs to the age of Cyprian or of later Fathers? But this has, from time immemorial, been the weak point of spurious Catholicism, viz., to claim a Divine origin, and therefore a perpetual binding force, for developments in polity and ritual which either are plainly contrary to Apostolical teaching, or, where this is not the case, may be traced to natural causes, and the exercise of the discretion which has been purposely left to the Church by her Divine Founder. All through church history this tendency may be observed. Legitimate Catholicism, in controversies of doctrine, appeals, saving the paramount authority of Scripture, to the 'Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus,' as expressed in the three Creeds, for Christianity, as a gift from heaven, must surely be *one* fundamentally; assigns a *relatively* binding authority to undoubted Apostolical regulations, as, for example, the adoption of the synagogical model for the polity of the Church; censures any unnecessary breach of visible unity. Spurious Catholicism, instead of contenting itself with being what it is, an adaptation, more or less Apostolical, of external matters to changing

[1] Manning, 'Unity,' &c., p. 325

circumstances, claims for such changes a direct enactment from heaven; and where the evidence for the claim is wanting, does not hesitate to supply the deficiency by illicit means. The *spurious* writings of the second and third centuries throughout favour the hierarchical spirit which had begun to prevail in the Church. Certain constitutions, for example, of this tendency, and known now to be spurious, were clothed with the title of Apostolical.[1] Canons and Eucharistic Liturgies, which, whatever their value in other respects, cannot be traced directly up to Apostles, were, nevertheless, inscribed with their names. It was difficult for Boniface VIII. or his predecessors to establish from Scripture the claim 'that it is necessary to salvation that every human being should be subject to the Roman Pontiff;' therefore forged decretals of the early

[1] Ὁ ἐπίσκοπος . . . μεσίτης Θεοῦ καὶ ὑμῶν ἐν ταῖς πρὸς αὐτὸν λατρείαις . . . δι' ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος ἀναγεννήσας ὑμᾶς εἰς υἱοθεσίαν . . . οὗτος ὑμῶν βασιλεὺς καὶ δυνάστης, οὗτος ὑμῶν ἐπίγειος θεὸς μετὰ Θεόν.—Ap. Const. Lib. ii. c. 26. Εἰ οὖν ἐρρέθη Μωυσῆς ὑπὸ Κυρίου θεὸς, καὶ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐπίσκοπος εἰς θεὸν τετιμήσθω. Ibid., c. 30. Οὗτοι (ἐπίσκοποι) παρὰ θεοῦ ζωῆς καὶ θανάτου ἐξουσίαν εἰλήφασιν ἐν τῷ δικάζειν τοὺς ἡμαρτηκότας καὶ καταδικάζειν εἰς θάνατον πυρὸς αἰωνίου, καὶ λύειν ἁμαρτιῶν τοὺς ἐπιστρέφοντας, καὶ ζωογενεῖν αὐτούς.—Ibid., c. 33. Τοῖς γὰρ ἱερεῦσιν (*i.e.* the bishops) ἐπετράπη κρίνειν μόνοις· ὅτι εἴρηται αὐτοῖς (namely, in Deut. i. 16 and xvi. 18), Κρίμα δίκαιον κρίνατε.—Ibid., c. 36. Τούτους ἄρχοντας ὑμῶν καὶ βασιλεῖς ἡγεῖσθαι νομίζετε, καὶ δασμοὺς ὡς βασιλεῦσι προσφέρετε . . . ὅσῳ τοίνον ψυχὴ σώματος κρείττων, τοσούτῳ ἱερωσύνη βασιλείας.—Ibid., c. 34. Here in short compass bishops are styled mediators between God and man, and the representatives of God upon earth; as holding the keys of heaven and hell; as sole judges between Christians; and as superior to temporal monarchs. Apart from their matter, the *form* of these so-called Apostolical constitutions is sufficient to stamp them as spurious. The Apostles are introduced as *enacting laws* for the Christian community in the minutest particulars; not, as in Scripture, furnishing merely historical *precedents* on the more important points.

Bishops of Rome to this effect were made to speak the language of later times. The Council of Trent traces its sevenfold ministry to Acts ii. It finds the Papacy instituted when Christ said to Peter, 'On this rock I will build my Church,' or 'Feed my sheep.' Spurious Catholicism not only claims a right, a legitimate one, to supply what the Church may from time to time, either as regards addition or alteration, in its outward organisation require, always, of course, with due deference to the Apostles in their writings, but it claims for such developments a *Divine* sanction. Thus were Christians once more brought under the yoke of a ceremonial law like that of Moses, or, as Luther expressed it, delivered into Babylonish captivity. In the case of the Eucharist even worse results followed; for the whole fabric being supposed of Divine appointment, it followed inevitably that the Church—that is, the clergy—had been by Christ invested with a mediatorial character between man and God.

But in the next place, and principally, the place which in Scripture the Sacraments occupy as means of grace deserves attention. Not to communicate, in the first instance, spiritual life, but to be signs and seals of it when otherwise communicated, is the office which Scripture assigns to them. According to the original institution, neither baptism nor the Lord's Supper was to be administered save to those concerning whom the presumption might be entertained that, by other means, and not Sacraments, they had been brought to a saving faith in Christ and were under the influence of the

Holy Spirit. 'He that believeth and is baptized,' is the divinely-established relation between the new life and its visible seal; and it is needless to say that it also belongs to the other Sacrament. 'Repent and be baptized' is the reply of Peter to the question put by his hearers, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' 'All that believed . . . continued daily in the temple and in breaking of bread.' Simon Magus believed, or professed to do so, and then he was baptized. 'What doth hinder me to be baptized?' asked the Eunuch of Philip: 'If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest,'[1] was the answer. Lydia, when her heart had been opened to attend to Paul's preaching, and not until then, was baptized with her household; and so it was with the jailer of Philippi. But it is needless to multiply proofs of what is obvious to every reader of the New Testament. In every recorded case a preliminary operation of the Holy Spirit on the heart, described as repentance and faith, is presumed as necessary to the effect of the Sacrament. And if we ask, What was the instrument of that preliminary work? the answer is, The Word of God preached by the Apostles or Apostolic men, the promise of forgiveness of sins through faith in the crucified and risen Saviour. Thus was saving union with Christ initiated; the Sacraments followed as visible tokens to the Church of that unseen spiritual renovation, not as the primary

[1] The Revised Version omits these words as of little authority. It is not unlikely that they were introduced into the text from the margin; but whoever first placed them there must have been convinced that baptism is incomplete without faith in the receiver.

instruments of it. Had the intended relation been otherwise, Christ would have instituted the Sacraments at the threshold of His ministry, but He did not so. First He attached by His teaching and the secret operation of His grace the twelve to Himself. He established a living communion between them and Himself; and then, when He had thus brought them to some ripeness of religious knowledge and faith, He delivered to them, ere He left the world, the visible tokens of their fellowship with Him and with each other. And as He acted towards them, so did they act in gathering converts, Jewish or Gentile, into the Church. They followed their Master's instructions: 'Go ye, and make disciples (R.V.) of all nations,' by the preaching of the Gospel; and then baptize these converts, and place them under further instruction (Matt. xxviii. 19).

But a different view of the matter, and one which necessarily leads to notions of the Church different from those of the Protestant Confessions, is presented in the Romish formularies, and adopted by those who, though not formally Romanists, sympathise with the teaching of the Council of Trent and its Catechism. It has received the name of the Sacramental system, or the corporate life of the Church, terms which practically express the same thing. The fundamental idea conveyed by both is, that spiritual life proceeds not from direct union with Christ through faith in the Word of promise, but from union with the visible Church; and, since there is no formal union with the

visible Church except by Sacraments, through a Sacramental union. Sometimes language is used from which it might seem that under the expression, corporate life of the Church, there lurks an indistinct idea of the Church's being, apart from the individuals of whom it is composed, a moral person, standing to Christians in the same relation as a mother does to her children.[1] Strange as this personification of an abstraction may seem when nakedly propounded, it has proved in skilful hands an instrument of great power. To the Church Christians owe their spiritual birth; the Church trains

[1] 'The individual in his closet addresses the Saviour, and precious is the privilege of his perpetual access to his Lord; but more elevated still is the public worship, because as an individual he stands in a lower position than that which belongs to him in the Church as a part of her incorporate life. He is not, as an individual, so assured of his being wedded to Christ as is the Church in her mystical and indissoluble relations with Him; and she acts upon this, not supposition only, but moral certainty of His favour and of vital union with Him, with a degree of confidence which for the body is safe, but for the individual is intoxicating.'—Gladstone, Ch. Prin., ch. iii. § 56, p. 130. (Does the Christian change his standing with his locality?) The mode of speaking of the Church of which this passage is an example, and which has its root in the realism of the human mind, is of ancient date. 'Cum autem nativitas Christianorum in baptismo sit; baptismi autem generatio et sanctificatio apud solam sponsam Christi sit, quæ parere spiritualiter et generare filios deo possit; ubi et ex quâ et cui natus est qui filius ecclesiæ non est, ut habere quis Deum Patrem ante ecclesiam matrem.'—Cyp. Ep. 74. 'Ecclesia quippe omnes per Baptismum parit, sive apud se, id est ex utero suo, sive extra se de semine viri sui.'—Aug. de Bapt. cont. Don., i. 23. 'Blessings on his soul who first invented sleep, said Sancho Panza the wise. All these blessings, and ten thousand times more, on him who found out abstractions, personifications, and impersonals. In certain cases they are the first of all soporifics. Terribly alarmed should we be if things were proposed to us in the concrete; therefore comes in abstraction and personification. Make ye peace with France, &c.'—Burke on a Regicide Peace, Works, vol. ix.

them for their heavenly inheritance, decides for them in doubtful cases, nourishes them with her ordinances, prays for them, and, if need be, brings them under discipline.

That there is no such thing as the Church, considered as an abstract personality, performing acts of thought and will distinct from its members, is obvious; but so convenient was the fiction found, that even at this day nothing is more common than the employment of it; or, the abstract passing into the concrete, the Church comes to mean the clergy; and this is in fact what the personification usually ends in. The Sacramental system means this: That Christ by His death, resurrection, and ascension *earned* a right to bestow on the Church as a visible body the prerogative of dispensing His saving powers, so that they who wish to approach the Saviour must do so by sacramental union with the Church in the first instance, and thus gain admittance to covenanted grace. The saving powers are, indeed, Christ's, for they would not have existed at all if He had not earned them, but the distribution of them is the Church's office, and the beneficial reception of them by the candidate for eternal life depends on his having previously passed through the ecclesiastical portal. In other words, Christ, having completed the work of redemption, has withdrawn from the active administration of this dispensation, having previously delegated His offices, royal, priestly, and prophetical, to a representative on earth. The Romanist declares this representative to be the

Pope, the Anglo-Catholic the visible Church; though how, in controverted matters, the judicial voice of the Church is to be ascertained must always be to the latter a difficulty. And when the system is fully developed, as in Romanism, a special Sacrament is appropriated to each stage of the Christian life. Baptism regenerates, and moreover impresses a 'character' or stamp on the soul, by which the recipient is for ever distinguished from those who are not Christians, and confers upon him a capacity for receiving the other Sacraments; Confirmation arms the baptized Christian for the spiritual conflict; in the Eucharist (strange that there should be no 'impressed character' connected with this Sacrament!) he feeds on Christ's glorified humanity; Penance (and this is the reason why the Eucharist is not held to convey forgiveness of sin) restores him when fallen from grace; the Sacrament of orders confers the mystical grace of priesthood, and the impressed character is indelible, so that no priest can ever become a layman; extreme unction dismisses him with the Church's passport to his purgatorial cleansing.[1] Now let the Sacramental system be combined with the doctrine of the *opus operatum* as taught by the great schoolmen and sanctioned by the Council of Trent, and it will be easy to see how the Romish conception of the Church follows as a matter of course. Gabriel Biel, the last of the great Scho-

[1] Matrimony is not here included in the list, since the Romish theologians themselves are puzzled how to prove it a Sacrament, what the form and what the matter is.

lastic writers, thus explains what is meant by *opus operatum*: 'Sacraments are said to convey grace *ex opere operantis* when it is in the way of merit; that is, when the outward reception does not of itself benefit, but over and above this there is required in the receiver an inward good disposition, in proportion to which, after the manner of merit of condignity or congruity, is the grace given; to which grace nothing is added by the outward rite. But *ex opere operato* means that by the very act of receiving grace is conferred, unless mortal sin stands in the way; that beyond participation no inward preparation of the heart is necessary.'[1] This statement is endorsed by the Council: 'If any one shall affirm that the Sacraments of the new law do not contain the grace which they signify, or do not confer the grace itself on those who place no bar (*obicem*) in the way, let him be Anathema.'[2] Now the bar is elsewhere explained, as Biel explains it, to be mortal sin or open breaches of morality; anything short of this is no hindrance. So that it comes to this, neither faith (in the Protestant sense of the word) nor repentance, nor, in fact, anything like moral renovation, is necessary to a beneficial reception of the Sacraments. But the one true Church is the community of the baptized, whether one such or the aggregate; the one true Church, therefore, is a mixed body, the net containing good and bad fish; for union with it, through which

[1] Lib. iv. Sent. diss. i. 93. Quoted by J. Gerhard, Loc. xix. c. 7, § 86.
[2] Sess. vii. can. 6.

the way lies to Christ, is effected by Sacraments, and the efficacy of Sacraments does not depend upon any moral qualification in the receiver. If it be replied that unless sacramental grace is improved into renovating grace, salvation will not follow, we thankfully accept the admission; but the question before us is not what is necessary to salvation, but what constitutes the essential being of the body of Christ, the members of which are supposed in Scripture to be as vitally in union with their exalted Head as the members of a living human body are with its head. If Sacraments do not necessarily either imply or impart sanctification, then 'the members of Christ, the children of God, the inheritors of the kingdom of heaven' (for such men are supposed to be made by the Sacrament of baptism), may be without it.

The whole of this tissue of error arises from not observing, or not wishing to observe, that it is a very different instrument from Sacraments to which Scripture assigns the office of awakening spiritual life in the individual. It is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, by which the change is first effected. No case can be cited from Scripture in which a preliminary work of this kind was not presumed to precede the Sacraments. Now the Word preached cannot join any one to the visible Church, though it may and does, under the assistance of the Holy Ghost, make him a member of the Church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; the Word indeed is an outward, though not visible, vehicle, but it

cannot prove visibly that the promise has been received by individuals in faith, for the 'winged words' of the preacher do, in fact, make themselves wings and fly away, after having wrought their appointed work on the heart; the instrument of the Spirit in conversion is itself spiritual, not material. To the *Church* the evidence that the Word has done its work of convincing of sin and leading to Christ, in the case of any individual, is, no doubt, the reception of the Sacraments; but in the sight of God the preliminary operation of the Spirit, whereby he was made a repentant believer, already places him in a state of salvation. Do we attribute too much to the Word in the economy of grace? According to St. Peter and St. James, regeneration is effected by it;[1] and St. Paul tells Christians that they are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus;[2] but faith and the Word are correlative terms. By it the Church is built up and grows to a spiritual temple in the Lord;[3] pastors, teachers, prophets, evangelists, all ministers of the Word, receive their gifts from above, 'for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ;'[4] Christ preached is the

[1] 'Born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.'—1 Peter i. 23. 'Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.'—James i. 18.

[2] Gal. iii. 26.

[3] 'As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.'—1 Peter ii. 2. 'I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.'—Acts xx. 32.

[4] Ephes. iv. 11–12.

Bread of life. The ignoring in the Sacramental system of the Word as a means, nay, the principal means of grace, is very evident and very significant. Shall we say that the repentance and faith produced by the Word as an instrument are effects of grace indeed, but of grace inferior in value to Sacramental grace, whatever notion we may form of that? Things to be hoped for, and prayed for, after visible incorporation in the visible Church, but which may be dispensed with for a time, without impairing the virtue of the Sacraments? On the contrary, they form the very primary effects which the Holy Spirit alone could produce, and which He was sent to produce. 'When He is come, He will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the Prince of this world is judged.'[1] There was the first step in a Jew's or a Gentile's becoming a Christian; Sacraments followed, necessary indeed, but second in the order of time. This deposition of the Word from its proper place in the Gospel has been the occasion of great embarrassment to writers of this school, in their attempts to explain why St. Paul should have insisted so strongly as he does on justification by faith, and what he can mean by the faith of which he speaks. Justification, it is said, comes by baptism; but St. Paul never mentions any other instrument by which that great gift is con-

[1] John xvi. 8–11.

veyed than faith. Explanations have been attempted, but not with much success.

The late Cardinal Newman, in his lectures on justification, considers this prominence of faith in Scripture to be a special reward to it for its renouncing all merit of its own. Another writer meets the difficulty thus: 'It is sometimes argued that St. Paul could not have believed in salvation through the Church because this contradicts his doctrine of the justifying effect of individual faith. But, in fact, there is no such contradiction. The Christian life is a correspondence between the grace communicated from without, and the inward faith which, justifying us before God, opens out the avenues of communication between man and God, and enables man to appropriate and to use the grace which he receives in Christ.' And when do men receive the aforesaid grace? 'Now grace comes to them through social sacraments, as members of one Spirit-bearing body.'[1] What then is the nature of this 'inward faith' which, it is confessed, the Apostle so earnestly and at such length treats of? The writer does not explain; but it is evident that it is nothing more than an otiose assent to the mysterious doctrines of revelation as expressed in the Creeds, and an equally otiose acceptance of the mysterious doctrines of the Sacraments; precisely as the Romish Catechism defines justifying faith, and explains in what sense it is called faith. It is a passive receptivity, not an active apprehension. The faith of which St. Paul speaks is founded

[1] Gore on 'Church and Ministry,' p. 49.

on conviction of sin, the work of the Holy Spirit, and eliciting the anxious cry, 'What shall I do to be saved?' and it consists in the apprehension of the promise of forgiveness of sin in and through Christ. This was the faith of those who 'were pricked in their heart'[1] at the discourse of Peter, and who thankfully received his assurance, 'The promise is to you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord God shall call.' But the justifying faith of Romanism never approaches this intensity of feeling. Hence the peculiar distaste shown towards the Lutheran doctrine and that of our Church, 'We are justified by faith *only*,' and not by works or by Sacraments, either wholly or in part. Many who disparage it are too well informed to join in the vulgar charges of Antinomianism sometimes brought against it; but men's instincts never fail them, though their arguments may be defective. Justification by faith only is distasteful because it makes the Atonement, not the Incarnation, the primary fact of the Gospel, because it is inconsistent with the Sacramental system, and because it robs the confessional of its terrors.

But it may be urged that the order of salvation as described in Scripture, viz., repentance, faith, and then the Sacraments, belongs only to those who, like the first believers, had been converted as adults, while for those who have been born within the pale of visible Christianity a different one has been appointed, viz.,

[1] Acts ii. 37.

first the administration of the Sacrament (baptism) in infancy, whereby the subject, while incapable of repentance and faith, is yet incorporated into Christ, and receives a grace which, whatever name we may give it, supplies the defect arising from natural incapacity, and, if all proceeds in due order, will issue in a holy life. In fact, the positions have been broadly laid down, that 'whereas to become a Christian in the beginning of the Gospel was a conscious act of the individual choice and will, now the whole body of Christendom is by an act of God made Christian without any conscious act of choice;'[1] and that 'the reason why the baptism of infants has ever been esteemed so indispensable a blessing is, that it is *God's appointed means* to the privileges of this mystical body' (of Christ).[2] Into the thorny controversies to which this subject points it is neither the wish nor the intention of the writer to enter at length. But surely we may ask whether a modification of the original institution, which, however within the discretion of the Church, cannot claim to be either of Apostolic practice or sanction, of which the explanatory theory is nowhere to be found *explicitly* in Scripture, furnishes grounds for dogmatical statements touching its effects, these statements to be accepted as part of the Divine deposit of faith? The simple fact is, that one only case, that of adults, is given us in Scripture to found our conclusions upon. This is one of the omissions of Scripture which are nearly as significant

[1] Manning, 'Unity,' &c., p. 263.
[2] Wilberforce, 'Incarnation,' &c., p. 471.

as its contents. To the omniscient view of the Divine Founder of Christianity, the controversies, bitter and protracted, which have disturbed the peace of the Church on this subject must have been present, and we might think it desirable that some statements or explanations respecting the case of infants (and analogous ones, of which there are some) should have been furnished for the benefit of the Church; but whether we think so or not, this will not alter the fact. There is no prohibition of infant baptism, that is certain; and there are analogies and hints which may be thought to go a good way towards justifying the general practice of the Church;—this is the position in which the question is left in the inspired record, and no doubt for wise purposes. When we leave the case of adults, competent to hear and understand, we pass into the region of conjecture, inference, and charitable presumption. Or can the contrary be seriously maintained because Peter, in his first sermon to the Jews, says, 'The promise is unto you and to your children;'[1] or because 'households' are said to have been baptized, these 'households' being also said to have believed, and to 'have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints;'[2] or because St. Paul pronounces the children of one believing parent 'holy' (ἅγια), when in the same passage he applies the

[1] Acts ii. 39. Harold Browne, Art. xxvii. s. 4. One would have thought that a reader of the Old Testamént could have put no other construction on the words than 'you and your posterity.'

[2] Acts xviii. 8; 1 Cor. xvi. 15. Lydia, Crispus, &c., were persons of substance, and probably had a domestic establishment (in Latin *familia*) of slaves and freedmen. These, under the impulse of the head of the house, offered themselves for baptism.

same word in a verbal form to the unbelieving parent (*ἡγίασται*), who could not, of course, have been baptized.[1] Nothing is gained to the cause of truth by arguments of this kind. Not much more conclusive is the inference that because the first Jewish converts practised circumcision, they must naturally have baptized their children. These converts had already circumcision, the seal of the Abrahamic covenant of faith (Gen. xvii. 10–11), given before the Law, and the direct precursor of the Gospel covenant; and they might think no other seal or sign necessary, especially while no symptom of the impending dissolution of the Mosaic theocracy (A.D. 70) was in evidence. Infant baptism, like infant communion, which held its place in the Church for centuries, can lay claim to no higher origin than an ecclesiastical one; and it needs no higher, unless the principle be adopted that no discretion has been left to the Church to deviate, under special circumstances, in matters non-essential, from the strict letter of Scripture, and that whatever is not commanded is forbidden. In the exercise of that discretion infant communion (the arguments for which were very similar to those for infant baptism) fell into disuse, while infant baptism has been retained, as having more to say for itself, analogies and hints (*e.g.* Mark x. 13) from Scripture, which the other Sacrament could not appeal to. We have no reason, then, to doubt that He who received little children and blessed them 'favourably alloweth this charitable work' of ours; but

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 14.

we do not pretend to its being more than a charitable work—one, that is, which we think must be pleasing to Christ, but for which we can allege no positive prescription. We are now in the region of prayer and hope, but not of dogma. The cautious inquirer, while he may decline to acknowledge the validity of some of the objections brought against infant baptism, will probably admit that it is an imperfect baptism, and awaits its complement of Confirmation. And such seems the opinion of our Church, which does not admit those baptized in infancy to the Holy Communion until they have publicly assented to the vows made on their behalf—that is, supplied what was wanting at the time of their baptism. If these vows are sincerely taken on themselves by the candidates, they are then, but not before, in the condition of the hearers of Peter and of Paul, whose heart the Lord opened so that they believed, and after they believed were baptized. That this is the meaning of Confirmation in our Church is clear from the service itself, which nowhere speaks of it as a quasi-sacrament conveying a special grace of its own.

When, then, volumes are written or statements made on the tacit assumption that infant baptism is the normal case of Scripture, or that what is said in Scripture of adult baptism may be applied without reservation to that of infants (and analogous cases that might be mentioned), we pause, because the ground beneath us is not firm. We neither reject nor undervalue the general practice of Christendom, but when it is applied to reverse the order of things which the

Scriptures do establish, entailing thereby a whole series of important consequences, we must protest against the assumption as inconsistent with fact. It may be our wisdom to avoid, as much as possible, connecting the technical terms of theology, regeneration, justification, and the like—all of which, in their full Scriptural meaning, imply a conscious subject—with the case of infants or others of an analogous class, and to content ourselves with the general term salvation, which, we may hope, will, in some way unknown to us, reach those who, from physical infirmity, have been unable, in this life, consciously to appropriate to themselves the blessings of redemption. Meanwhile, if Scripture is to decide the point, not the Sacraments, but the Word is the primary instrument of saving union with Christ.[1]

3. The Apostolical Epistles introduce us to local Christian societies at Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, &c., as actually constituted. They admit members by baptism, they celebrate the Eucharist, they assemble for public worship; duly-appointed officers, presbyters and deacons, conduct, in their various ways, the affairs of each society. They still remain, practically, under the teaching of the Apostles. Where St. Paul could not in person visit the Churches he had founded, to impart further instruction on matters of doctrine or discipline or doubtful questions, he addressed them by letter, and in some instances by the mission of confidential friends, such as Timothy and Titus, who, for the time being, acted as representa-

[1] See Appendix A for some further remarks on this subject.

tives of the Apostle. It is not at present to the contents of these Epistles, but to their structure that the reader's attention is invited.

To almost all of them a salutation is prefixed, of which the following are examples: 'To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called saints (κλητοῖς ἁγίοις), grace to you,' &c.;[1] 'Unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints;'[2] 'To the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus;'[3] 'To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi;'[4] 'To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse;'[5] 'Unto the Church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ;'[6] 'To the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, &c., elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ;'[7] 'To them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;'[8] 'To them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ.'[9] To a plain understanding these expressions convey the meaning that the Apostle addressed those to whom he wrote as not nominal, but real Christians; they are 'called saints,' the outward and the inward call coinciding; they are 'faithful,' that is, believers, 'in Christ Jesus;' they are 'elect

[1] Rom. i. 7. [2] 1 Cor. i. 2. [3] Ephes. i. 1. [4] Phil. i. 1.
[5] Col. i. 2. [6] 1 Thess. i. 1. [7] 1 Peter i. 1–2.
[8] 2 Peter i. 1. [9] Jude 1.

according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit and sprinkling of the blood of Christ;' they had obtained 'like precious faith' with the writer himself (St. Jude); predicates which Scripture never assigns except to those who are presumed to be in saving union with Christ. We are told, however, that this is a mistake, and that they mean nothing more than a profession of faith, an outward dedication to God by baptism, an admission to spiritual privileges, which, however, may never issue in a realisation of them; in short, that we must lower the import of the terms to reconcile them with fact. That such an interpretation is not the obvious one may not be a reason for rejecting it, but it does invite to a closer examination. Especially when we remember that the Apostles uniformly identify themselves, as regards their Christian standing, with their correspondents. 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings;'[1] 'That ye may be comforted by the mutual faith both of you and me.'[2] Did St. Paul, when he thus wrote, regard himself as only nominally interested in the blessings of the new covenant? If his own faith and his own sanctification were real, then we must conclude that he presumed those whom he addressed to be in the same sense partakers of Christ.

We are reminded, however, that since the various titles which the New Testament applies to Christians—such as 'saint,' 'called,' 'elect,' 'adoption'—are derived

[1] Ephes. i. 3. [2] Rom. i. 12.

from the elder economy, they must be understood in the same sense as they bore in it. So argues an esteemed writer: 'Every Christian is called and elected to the Christian privileges, as every Jew was to his . . . there is no such distinction among Christians as the called and the uncalled, the elect and the non-elect.'[1] Certainly, no such distinctions are found, and the reason is plain; the Apostles presumed that each local Church corresponded to its idea, to what it ought to be; and if it did, the distinctions could not exist. In such a state of perfection all the members would be elect, called, true believers, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. But as this state is not at present attained or attainable; as every particular Church must be a mixed body; the Scriptural designations, it is argued, must be lowered to meet the case, and 'all Christians' must be held to mean 'Christians of all sorts,' nominal, unsanctified Christians as well as real ones; all, in short, who have been admitted by baptism into the society, and so far to a state of privilege, it being immaterial to the idea whether the privilege issues in a state of possession or not. It is not remembered that if a state of privilege is enough to entitle a man to be called a Christian, every heathen or Jew living in a Christian country might be so called, for it is indeed a distinguishing mercy that he should be within reach of Christian instruction and the means of grace. As regards the analogy of the Mosaic covenant, the writer justly describes that covenant. It was only in a

[1] Whately, "Essays," 2nd Series, Essay iii.

national sense that the Jews are described in the Old Testament as a holy nation, an elect or peculiar people, a kingdom of priests, possessors of the adoption ('Israel is my son, even my first-born'[1]). And is not this circumstance in itself sufficient to raise a doubt as to the propriety of a transfer of such terms in their Jewish sense to Christianity? It is acknowledged that this cannot be done in other instances. For example, the words temple, sacrifice, priesthood, all derived from the preparatory dispensation, undergo essential modifications of meaning in their employment by the Apostles to describe the Christian facts corresponding to them. And so it is in this case. The Jewish nation was a type, and nothing more, of the Christian Israel, the one true Church of Christ; the Jew was a Jew by natural birth, Christians are born again of the Spirit; the Jew was called by Moses out of Egypt, Christians are called by the effectual operation of Divine grace out of a sinful world; the Jews were a kingdom of priests so far as they were selected out of all nations to be brought into a special relation to Jehovah, but not to mediate between those nations and Jehovah; they were outwardly God's people, but Christians are inwardly so; the Jewish adoption was national, Christians personally possess the Spirit of Adoption, whereby they cry Abba, Father.[2] The terms remain both in the type and the antitype, but their signification in the latter is very different, and of a deeper nature. This argument, then, against literally

[1] Exod. iv. 22.

[2] Gal. iv. 5–6.

interpreting the language of the Epistles falls to the ground.

Nor is the next one more conclusive. How, it is asked, could St. Paul designate a local Church collectively as one of real believers and saints when he must have more than surmised that many in it did not answer the description? Why did he not address his Epistle to the Ephesians to that portion of the community who were 'saints and faithful in Christ Jesus'? Because in the Apostolic Church an effective discipline—the very idea of which seems to be lost amongst us—was exercised. By its means, they having been separated from the society whose lives belied their profession, the Apostles, not being for this purpose gifted with the power of discerning spirits, were compelled to take the rest at their profession, and to deal with them as real Christians so long as there was no visible proof to the contrary. Their profession was to be, not nominal, but sincere Christians. In other words, they addressed particular Churches as manifestations of the body of Christ (true but imperfect), and this latter consists of those who have saving faith and are really sanctified. St. Paul must have been well aware that, however far the sifting process might be carried, it could not be as if Christ Himself had conducted it; but all that man could do having been done towards making the fact correspond to the presumption, how was the community to be addressed? Was the Apostle to attempt a further discrimination between the inwardly tares and the wheat? The attempt would have been equally vain

and presumptuous. Without pronouncing, therefore, on the state of individuals, he assumed the whole society to be what it professed to be—true believers. Except on this assumption, he could not have proceeded to enforce Christian duties by Christian motives. A lecturer on colours must take for granted that his hearers possess the faculty of sight. He describes the society not from the mixture of tares and wheat, still less from the tares in it, but from the wheat alone, from what the true Church is, in fact, now, and still more what it will be when an unerring severance of heterogeneous elements will make visible Christendom identical with the body of Christ. It is on the same principle that forms of prayer and praise for the use of a congregation are composed. No congregation, any more than the whole society, can contain none but sincere and devout worshippers; yet when a liturgy is drawn up for its use, the assumption must be made that this is so; the form must express sentiments and desires which only they who are led by the Spirit of God can or do feel. Unwritten prayers, too, must be constructed on the same principle. It is not forgotten that there may be tares among the wheat, but necessity compels us to take no account of the tares, to pass them over in silence. We cannot compose prayers or hymns for those who are supposed to have no living union with Christ; we cannot, knowingly and avowedly, put such compositions in the mouths of mere professors. Every congregation in our Church is regarded as consisting of 'dearly-beloved brethren,' who can heartily

join in the confession of sin, accept the promise of absolution and remission through Christ, pray in the spirit for what they need, and praise God from the heart for His various mercies.

But do not the Epistles prove that in these primitive Churches many were found very deficient in doctrine or practice, or both? St. Paul, for example, speaks of the Corinthians as being, on account of their divisions, 'carnal' and not 'spiritual,' as 'babes in Christ,' and reproves them for their laxity of discipline in the case of the incestuous person, and their irreverence in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Some of them he accuses of denying or doubting that there is any resurrection from the dead, which would involve a doubt whether Christ had risen. But this only proves that the first Christians, like those of every age, were not perfect (and, in truth, the Apostolic Churches seem, in various particulars, not fully to have worked out the leaven of unrighteousness which converts brought with them into the Church), but not that they were destitute of spiritual life. A babe is not a man, but he is a living being. A Christian may be deficient in many points of practice, and yet be a true Christian notwithstanding. The question is, On what supposition does St. Paul admonish the Corinthians? As dead in their sins and needing conversion? or as spiritually quickened but needing exhortation to walk conformably to their calling? The latter, unquestionably. The arguments which he uses would not be appreciated, not even understood, save by those to whom some spiritual light

had been vouchsafed. Even the incestuous person may have fallen from grace, as David and others did, and he was certainly recovered to repentance as David was.

It appears, then, that what in some quarters is called 'the dissenting view' is nothing but the usage of Scripture. Thus a modern writer speaks of it as one of the peculiarities of Dissenters that their church-membership presupposes internal sanctity and living faith: 'The design and intention of dissenters is to admit none but really regenerate and holy men into their Churches,' and the argument by which this is proved is as follows: Baptism is the rite of admission into the Church, 'but the only conditions of baptism were repentance and faith; there was no mention made of regeneration, sanctity, real piety, whether visible or invisible, as prerequisites to its reception; those who were baptized came to the holy fountain as repenting sinners, not as professing saints.'[1]

It is difficult to understand these statements. Surely, repentance and faith, produced by the preaching of the Word, the Holy Spirit co-operating with it, *are* regeneration in its moral, that is, its essential aspect. Genuine repentance is sorrow for past sin and a resolution to walk, for the future, in newness of life. Faith too is the work of the Holy Spirit, not indeed faith as a mere assent to doctrine or a belief of sacramental mysteries, but as the acceptance of the promise of forgiveness through Christ. And are not repentance and faith essential elements of Christian sanctity, not only

[1] Palmer on the Church, vol. i. pp. 410–412.

at the beginning, but throughout the whole of the spiritual life? 'Such a system,' he continues, 'could never compose a Church of professing saints only.' That a local Christian society never can in this world be composed wholly of saints is admitted; but that it does not consist even of professing saints is something new to the readers of Holy Scripture. Finally, we are informed that 'the Church of England, acting on a different principle (from dissent), admits persons of all sorts and ages to baptism.' That she admits persons of all ages is true, but that she admits persons of all sorts—if the meaning be that she is indifferent to the inward state of those to whom she administers the Sacrament—is not so. Let us hear her speaking for herself: 'What is required of persons to be baptized?—Repentance whereby they forsake sin, and faith whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament.' If this is the voice of the Church of England, it is certain that she adopts not any dissenting theory, but the teaching of every Protestant Church, and that she and the writer cited are seriously at variance.

The salutations then with which the Epistles open must be taken in their true and natural sense. They express what each particular Church ought to be, what it professes to be—in other words, what the true idea of the Church is. . In fact, the reality does not correspond to the idea; but this is because as soon as ever the true Church manifests itself outwardly, as it must do if it is the true one, it contracts imperfections which are

inseparable from its present state. It preaches the pure Word, but in passing through an earthly channel the ministration may not embrace the whole counsel of God; it administers the Sacraments, but is obliged to content itself with a *profession* of the necessary qualifications; it appoints officers and representatives, but cannot answer for their being what they would be if Christ appointed them; no assembly of worshippers, no missions, no works of love, are quite free from the taint of the 'old man,' not indeed dominant, and yet not quite extirpated. But in its idea it is a body of saints and faithful brethren in Christ. To abandon this conception would be to assail the essential being of the Church—what it is before it is anything else—what it is notwithstanding visible imperfections at present inseparable from it.

To sum up briefly the results of the preceding inquiries: The method which revelation pursued from the first prophecy (Gen. iii. 15) is well described by the inspired writer, 'God who, at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son;'[1] that is, the scheme of redemption was only gradually unfolded, and advanced simultaneously in all its parts. The direction of the progression is indisputable, viz., from a religion of legal enactment, ceremonial, and type, and generally of an external

[1] Heb. i. 1-2. Rather 'in sundry partitions,' one portion after another, and 'in sundry modes,' type, prophecy, &c.

character, to a more spiritual one, to one which is emphatically described as 'the ministration of the Spirit.'[1] We have seen how the discipline of the Law, in conjunction with prophecy, must have operated towards the growth, in well-disposed minds, of a religion which, if we cannot call it Christian, contained in itself the chief elements of a Christian spirit, and which just in proportion as it did so receded from the legal system which had sheltered its infancy in early times. The moral law convinced the worshipper of sin; the ceremonial law suggested the idea and raised an expectation of a better atonement yet to come; impressions which were fixed and strengthened by the Prophets. While thus training its pupils, the legal system paved the way to its own dissolution, and only waited the appointed time to resign its charge to the liberty and responsibilities of spiritual manhood. And thus, through these various influences, it came to pass that when the Saviour appeared, there were many who were 'waiting for the consolation of Israel,' and it only needed the joyful εὑρήκαμεν of a Philip to transform the Israelite without guile into a Christian believer.[2] The ministry of Christ's forerunner and of Christ Himself operated in the same direction. Christ was no new lawgiver, but the embodiment of the law in His person and the expounder of its spiritual meaning. He inaugurated a ministry of the Word, to be afterwards the instrument of the Holy Spirit in the founding and building up of the Chureh. The purposes of

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 8–11. [2] John i. 45.

revealed religion required that Christianity should be embodied in a visible Church, or aggregate of such Churches, and possess positive institutions; and provisions to that effect were made by Christ, either by Himself directly, or indirectly by His inspired Apostles acting in His name. But such appointments were founded on principles different from those of the Jewish law. They are not only fewer in number, but different in nature. Instead of aiming by discipline and habituation to form an inward disposition, they are meant to be evidence of its existence, they presuppose living union with Christ, and apart from it have no value. The outward model after which Christian societies were to be framed was providentially at hand long before the coming of Christ. And in following it, the Apostles proceeded as the want was felt, slowly and gradually. Baptism, in various forms, was familiar to the Jews; the Passover, from which the Eucharist took its rise, was no new rite; the laying on of hands, as a symbol of dedication, was of ancient date. No new institution sprang into existence, to mark the transition from Judaism to Christianity; none, at least, in the Apostolic age. When, therefore, we come to define the Church, that is, to assign its specific difference as compared with its predecessor the Jewish theocracy and other religious societies, we are reduced, in the last resort, to what it was on the day of Pentecost, a company of men filled with the Holy Ghost, under Apostolic instruction and guidance. It was not at that time an absolutely invisible Church

any more than it is now; it immediately became in various ways visible. It is not certain that these first recipients of the Holy Spirit received Christian baptism, but they were baptized with the Holy Ghost with visible signs; and by the same Divine Agent believers are now incorporated into the mystical body of Christ: 'By one Spirit we have all been baptized into one body, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.'[1]

By the term 'invisible Church' the Protestant Confessions do not mean that there are two distinct Churches, one invisible the other visible—it is one and the same Church that is under consideration—but that what is visible in the Church is posterior and secondary to what is not seen, viz., the indwelling of the Holy Ghost; that the Church developed itself from within outwards, not from without inwards. In becoming visible, it suffers from the imperfections of its present earthly condition. It cannot manifest itself as one body as well as one Spirit—that is, in its corporate capacity; it cannot wholly repel admixtures which do not belong to it; but this does not affect its order of development, or the fact that everything visible in it

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 13. The figurative use of the words baptism or baptize in the New Testament has not been sufficiently noticed. It is assumed that wherever they occur they must signify water baptism. But in two passages, at least, our Lord uses the word baptism figuratively: 'Ye shall be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with,' plunged, as it were into the same bath of suffering, Matt. xx. 23; and Acts i. 5, 'For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.' Here water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Ghost are contrasted, and the passage can only mean, Ye shall have the Holy Spirit abundantly poured out upon you, or ye shall be plunged into the element of the Holy Spirit.

springs from within, and would perish if that hidden source were dried up. Scripture speaks of the Churches of Ephesus, Corinth, &c., but also of the Church as one, the one body of Christ, into which all true Christians are baptized by one Spirit. Romanism carnalises the idea of this one body of Christ, but still does present something like it. Those who stop short of Romanism and yet maintain that the mystical body of Christ is a visible organisation must reconcile their view with Scripture as best they can; their one visible body has no organic unity; it is simply an aggregation of local Churches, without a common head and a central authority.[1]

It is only the Protestant who can assign to the Church a real place in the Creed. If it be in its essence as visible a body as the republic of Venice, we have no need of faith to realise its existence; it stands before our eyes as palpably as the temple and its ritual appealed to the senses of the Jews. Neither the Romish Catechism nor Bellarmine can explain its forming an Article of the Creed except by referring to the Sacra-

[1] By organic unity is meant the connection of the members with one head, and through that with one another. It is more than mere sameness of polity, as when we speak of the monarchies of Europe as one; one in respect of their being all monarchies, but otherwise independent communities. The human body, to which the Church is in Scripture compared, is an instance of organic unity. 'The form is mechanic when on any given material we impress a predetermined form, not necessarily arising out of the properties of the material; as when to a mass of clay we give whatever shape we wish it to retain when hardened. The organic form, on the other hand, is innate: it shapes, it develops itself from within, and the fulness of its development is one and the same with the perfection of its outward form.'—Coleridge, 'Remains,' vol. i. p. 229.

mental mysteries and mysterious doctrines of which it is the depository; but the question is about the Church itself, not about what it contains. It is the Church itself that we are to believe in, and the reason is obvious. The visible Church so little corresponds to its idea, that the Christian judging by the outward appearance might be tempted to doubt whether the gates of hell had not, contrary to Christ's promise, prevailed against it. What is its history but chiefly a history of the heresies, divisions, moral obliquities, and other scandals which have deformed the face of visible Christianity, and still do deform it? But here faith comes to the aid of sight. Faith clings to the promise that though local churches may become corrupt, and even perish, the true Church never can fail; that, in spite of what meets the eye, it is still there, invisible in its corporate unity to the eye of man, but known to God; the holy seed, indestructible, because Christ its Head lives and abides for ever, lives to intercede on behalf of his own that their faith fail not.

It is not to be denied that, the difference being not absolute but relative, tendencies may exist on one side as well as the other in a wrong direction. The Protestant may be tempted to undervalue the visible means of grace, or to forget that the inward fellowship of the Spirit, the real source of all that is visible in the Church, does not fully attain its aim as long as brotherly intercommunion is interrupted. He may be tempted to forget that the Sacraments, if they do not work *ex opere operato*, yet are special signs and seals of our union with Christ, and where they can be resorted to, should never

be neglected, and that Apostolic or post-Apostolic appointments, if it cannot be affirmed that they are *jure divino*, yet are not, on that account, to be put aside as of no importance. But Romanism, too, has its own dangers, and those of a more serious kind, such as superstition, fanaticism, intolerance, and especially its leaning towards Pelagianism in valuing the outward act more than the inward Spirit. In short, whereas the Protestant sets out from a true conception of the Church which may need to be counterbalanced by other truths, and the Romanist from a false conception which may to some extent be rectified, it is plain that the evil in the former case is less hurtful and more easily corrected than it is in the latter.

The objections sometimes urged against the Protestant view will, it is hoped, be met by the explanations given in Chapter II. Thus Rothe, following in the steps of Bellarmine, asks, How can an invisible Church be called a Church when it has no visible bonds of union and no corporate manifestation? The Reformers, he proceeds, found themselves in a difficulty: they held fast to the Article of the Creed, the holy Catholic Church, but could discover nothing, after the breaking up of the Romish Communion, corresponding to it; they were compelled, therefore, to transfer the unity, with other attributes, to an invisible body, which is a contradiction in terms.[1] The Reformers, including

[1] Anfänge, &c., s. 14. 'Non dici potest societas nisi in externis et visibilibus signis consistat; nam non est societas nisi se agnoscant ii qui dicuntur socii; non autem se possunt agnoscere nisi societatis vincula sint externa et visibilia.'—Bellarm. de Eccles. Mil., c. 12.

such men as Calvin, Melancthon, Bucer, to say nothing of our own, may be trusted to have known what they were about when they framed Articles and Confessions for their respective Churches. We may rely upon it that their definitions of the Church did not proceed from any embarrassment of the kind mentioned. But, in answer to Rothe, it is sufficient to observe that the Reformers speak of an invisible Church in the same sense in which, and no further than, they would have used that term in reference to the Pentecostal Church. What they mean was just as applicable to the Church of Acts ii. as it was to the Church of their times, or is to that of ours. The Pentecostal Church was anything but a purely invisible Church. The 120 disciples whom St. Peter addressed, Acts i. 15, were believers in Christ's mission, though as yet not fully instructed in its nature; they all continued in prayer and supplication; they assisted at the appointment of Matthias to supply the place of Judas Iscariot; when the gift from heaven came, they were all with one accord in one place; as soon as the promise of Christ was fulfilled, and they were formally constituted the Church by the descent of the Holy Ghost, they began to preach the Gospel to their fellow-countrymen, and to break bread from house to house amongst themselves. Here was a conspicuously visible Church. But in what relation did these visible tokens of their faith stand to the faith itself, the unseen principle within? In the relation of effect to cause, not of cause to effect. By the secret operation of Divine grace they had been led to believe in Christ as the

promised Saviour, and from this resulted their cleaving to the Apostles, their united prayers, their waiting at Jerusalem for the fulfilment of the promise. They preached and administered baptism to converts, but not until Christ had been fully formed in them by the presence of the Holy Ghost. That is, what was visible in this infant Church proceeded from what was invisible, depended upon the latter for its manifestation, and never would have come into existence but from an antecedent inner impulse. This is what the Reformers meant by the term, perhaps not happily chosen, the invisible Church, viz., that the presence of Christ by His Spirit is antecedent to, and the ground of, all outward Christian fellowship, all visible organisation, all fruits of the Spirit, all promotion of the kingdom of Christ in the world. The relation between what is inward and what is outward in the Church, thus once for all established, is never found reversed in the subsequent history of the Apostolic Church; the visible Church presupposes the invisible and proceeds from it, not the invisible from the visible. Whence came the revival of missionary zeal in our Church at a time when its official representatives seem to have lost sight of the duty? From a small company of her ministers, comparatively unknown to the world, but whose love to Christ and compassion for the heathen would no longer suffer them to remain passive. The Church Missionary Society developed itself from within outwards. So it was and is with every other exhibition of Christian activity; in worship, in works of charity,

in necessary extensions of organisation. As the new-born babe develops his bodily organs by force of the principle of natural life within, so the Church develops her visibility in all directions by force of spiritual life within. That the invisible Church has no 'corporate manifestation' at present (as Rothe observes) is true; no central human authority, infallible in faith and morals, is its head, from whom (as the Romanist interprets this passage) 'the whole body by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered and knit together,' grows into a holy temple (or rather polity), with one ruling principle, one intelligence, pervading all its parts. Why it cannot exhibit such an organic unity has been sufficiently explained. Far deeper, far more real, are the ligatures which even now knit the body of Christ into a whole. One faith, by which all its members are in Christ as the branches in the vine; one Holy Spirit, by whom all are quickened and sanctified; one hope of their calling, one principle of love by which all are animated. Its members may be scattered here and there in the various Churches which make up visible Christendom, but spiritual union survives local separation, and *in the sight of God* they ever form one Holy Catholic Church.

It is worth while to conclude with an extract from Möhler's 'Symbolik,' which shows how pious Roman Catholics, even at the cost of their own dogmatical theories, approximate occasionally to Protestant teaching. After very correctly describing the difference between Romanists and Protestants to consist in this,

that the former teach that the visible Church is first, and then comes the invisible; the latter, that from the invisible Church proceeds the visible, he feels constrained to acknowledge that, 'beyond doubt it is through those who live by faith in Christ and belong to Him in spirit and truth and rejoice at the thought of His second coming that Christ maintains His Church in prevailing power; beyond doubt that these are the pillars of His truth, which, apart from them, would be forgotten, or become pure error, or sink into a system of empty forms. Yes, certainly it is these, the invisible' (in respect of their inward state) 'who are transformed into the image of Christ, that are the supporters of the visible Church. The tares in the Church, hypocrites, mere professors, or dead members of the body, could not for a single day maintain the Church even in its visibility.'[1] If this is so, Protestants are justified in holding that the Church, in its essential being, and before it is anything else, is a company of men filled with the Holy Ghost.

[1] 'Symbolik,' § 49.

CHAPTER V

NOTES OF A TRUE CHURCH—PREDICATES OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

THE controversies of the sixteenth century issued, as is known, in a separation of the Protestant Churches, our own included, not from the Christianity, but from the visible communion of the Roman Church. The latter retaliated by anathematising the dissident communities as no longer Christian Churches, and consigning them to the uncovenanted mercies of God. This gave rise on either side to discussions on what are called notes of a Church, or the visible tokens by which it may be known and distinguished from other communities. The selection of notes was governed, as a matter of course, by the different conceptions entertained of the essential being of the Church.

1. The Romanist adopts the four attributes of the Nicene Creed, Unity, Sanctity, Catholicity, and Apostolicity; and he is enabled to do this because he holds the mystical body of Christ of which the Creed speaks to be a visible society under a visible head, and moreover his own Church, exclusive of every other, to be that society; only he is compelled to make the attributes follow the nature of the subject in which

they inhere—that is, to attach to them a merely outward signification. Thus, according to the Romish Catechism, the unity of the Church consists in its acknowledging the one central jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiff; its sanctity in its being the repository of the means of grace; its Catholicity in its bearing the name of Catholic; and its Apostolicity in its being governed by a ministry traceable by visible succession up to the Apostles. It is obvious that a spiritual unity, sanctity, &c., would not serve the purpose of notes, which by the force of the term are things that appeal to the senses. From this choice of notes the Protestant is precluded by his fundamental position, that the one holy Catholic Church of the Creed is at present an object of faith, not of sight, or is not yet manifested in its corporate unity, but only under the form of particular Churches. But since local Churches are necessarily mixed bodies, and no human eye can discern unerringly between the tares and the wheat, nothing remained but to select notes which should be independent of the spiritual state of individuals, and belong to the society only as the dispenser of the means of grace; and these are the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. Hence the wording of our Article XIX., which is practically the same as that of the Augsburg Confession and of all the Protestant Confessions: 'A visible Church of Christ is a congregation of professing believers, in the which the pure Word of God is preached and the Sacraments be duly administered.' Bellarmine objects, and not with-

out reason from his point of view, that 'these notes, the Word and the Sacraments, are insufficient for their purpose, for from them we cannot tell who are the elect and the justified, and learn rather where the Church lies hid than which it is.'[1] They are insufficient for his purpose because they pronounce nothing respecting the individual members of the Church in question, still less of the aggregate of such Churches, whereas his theory is that the members of the body of Christ ought to be, and can be, visibly known by the simple test whether they acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope in matters of faith and morals, and acquiesce in the dogma that no Church which does not admit the claim is to be considered a Christian Church. But they are sufficient for Protestant purposes, for they do serve to point out where the true Church, or a portion of it, is to be found. For the ministration of the Word and the use of the Sacraments are the very means by which the true Church is called into existence, and grows into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; and where these means are in use, no matter whether the preacher or the celebrant be a really pious man, there will be found, in greater or less proportion according to

[1] De Eccles. Mil., c. x. In the same chapter he well observes, that if Romanists were to admit that persons destitute of internal saving faith are not members of Christ's body, there would be no substantial difference between themselves and their opponents. There are, of course, other reasons why he objects to such notes as the pure preaching of the Word and the due administration of the Sacraments, when his Church preaches the sacrifice of the Mass and withholds the cup from the laity; but he prudently omits to state them, and contents himself with remarking, what is quite true, that they are inadequate to support his notion of the Church of the Creed.

circumstances, some members of Christ's body. And here we may see the importance of the maxim, 'Extra vocatorum cœtum non sunt quærendi electi,' as a decisive refutation of the charge that Protestants make two Churches, one invisible, the other visible. To each local Christian society is committed the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments; and the efficacy of these means of grace does not depend on the 'intention of the minister,' or any other qualification, provided it is the pure Word and the use of the Sacraments as Christ appointed; and therefore, in the full confidence of faith we conclude that *in* that society, and not beyond it, we are to seek for the members of Christ's body. And similarly, the whole body of Christ at any given time on earth is not to be sought outside the aggregate of local Churches which make up visible Christendom.

There is, therefore, not an identification, but an inseparable connection between a visible Church and the body of Christ in it; and hence, as has been previously explained, it is not two Churches, but one and the same Church, only considered ἔξωθεν καὶ ἔσωθεν, as a mere dispenser of the means of grace or as actually consisting of real believers and saints. But the Protestant notes are of still further import. They are a protest against the notion, whether Romish or Cyprianic, that any form of polity is essential to the idea of a true visible Church. For they implicitly affirm that every Church in which the Word and the Sacraments are duly administered, whatever other visible

features it may present, has a right to the title of a true Church, and a claim to be admitted into the fellowship of Christian Churches. If the composers of the Articles, for example, had held that covenanted grace is connected with a due episcopal succession, would they have omitted all mention of it, and worded Article XIX. as they did? 'It is sufficient,' says the Augsburg Confession, 'for the true unity of the Church (that is, visible Churches) that there be an agreement concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments.' It is worthy of remark that every theory of the Church, whether it profess to be Romanist or not, which teaches that its true being lies in its visible charàcteristics, adopts instinctively the Romish notes and rejects the Protestant;[1] though it is only Papal Romanism that can legitimately and consistently do so. Objections have been taken against the latter on logical grounds; they have been charged with a *petitio principii*; with assuming that to be known which it is the purpose of the inquirer to discover. 'The true Church, indeed, possesses the genuine Word of the Gospel and the Sacraments, which constitute its life. Nevertheless when it comes to a strife of different parties, the true Church cannot by these notes be distinguished. For this is the alternative proposed to us; we must either from the fact that he who preaches is a true saint conclude that his doctrine is pure, or from the circumstance that his doctrine is pure con-

[1] See, for example, Palmer's "Treatise on the Church," Part I. chap. ii.

clude that he is a living member of the Church. The former is impossible, for none but God knows who are truly sanctified by His Spirit; the latter supposes that he whom we conceive to be inquiring after the true doctrine is already acquainted with it, in which case the inquiry is superfluous. We inquire which is the true Church because we would ascertain which is the true doctrine of Christ, and be sure that we possess it; but if we are told, by way of answer, that there the true Church is where true doctrine is preached, the answer is manifestly nothing but the question itself—that is, it is no answer at all;' so argues Möhler, and Bellarmine before him.[1] The mistake they both make is in supposing that the controversy is between Christians and unbelievers, whether Jews or heathens, whereas it is between those who, professing faith in Christ and acknowledging the inspiration of Scripture, are in doubt which among the various societies calling themselves Christian has a right to that title. What motive or object could an unbeliever have in the question which is a true visible Church? He must first be convinced of the truth of Christianity before such a question would occur to him.

The inquirer here in view is supposed to have been born in a Christian Church, to have received Christian instruction in it, and to have been made acquainted in it with the Holy Scriptures, which the Church delivers

[1] Symb. § 46. 'Notæ debent notiores eâ re cujus notæ sunt; alioqui enim non sunt notæ. Jam sine dubio notius est quæ sit vera ecclesia quam quæ sit vera prædicatio, nam id ab ecclesia discimus.'—Bellarm. de Not. Eccles., c. 2.

to her members as the supreme authority in faith and morals. On examining the sacred volume which the Church, as she is bound to do, puts into his hands, he may discover that, however faithful she may have been to her trust as a guardian and witness of Holy Writ, and however sound in the primary articles of the Christian faith, she has overlaid the foundation with a serious mass of error—error if Scripture is to decide what is Divine truth. Thus the Jews were faithful trustees of the Old Testament Scriptures, but to their own shame and condemnation. The inquiring Christian, then, is supposed to be in possession of Divine truth, and by means of the Church, so far as she has delivered to him unmutilated and uncorrupt the charter of his salvation; but it is from the Scriptures and not from the Church that he has learnt what is the pure Word of God, and his present object is to discover which, out of many Christian societies all professing to teach the pure Word, is the one that most nearly approximates to that ideal. For, in truth, the absolutely pure Word of God *is* an ideal which we cannot pronounce any Church or individual to have reached. Scripture itself is absolutely pure, but its interpretation, in passing through an earthly channel, as it must do, may contract imperfection. However, since the Church bids her members to search the Scriptures, and professes to submit her teaching to their authority, it must be presumed that a student who approaches them with a candid and humble mind, and with prayer for the Holy Spirit's illumination, will

substantially discover the pure Word, or sufficiently so to enable him to decide whether the teaching even of his spiritual mother is at variance with it or not, and whether the variance (if it exists) is very serious or the reverse. Should he arrive at the former conclusion, and his spiritual mother refuse to amend her teaching by a reference to the Word of God, it may be his duty to join another Christian society the teaching of which is more scriptural, or, if such does not exist, to assist in forming a new one. So the Reformers judged, and so they acted. Our Article XIX., in stating the Protestant notes of a true visible Church, states the grounds of the Reformers' procedure and justifies it. That they involve no *petitio principii*, or arguing in a circle, is evident.

2. The predicates, Unity, Sanctity, Catholicity, which the Constantinopolitan Creed assigns to the Church, belong, in their highest signification, to the one true Church, the body of Christ, and cannot, except in a modified sense, be applied to visible Christendom. Still the latter, as being the manifestation of the former, is capable of a relative and imperfect unity, sanctity, and catholicity; for every inward property of the true Church, like that Church itself, strives after a corresponding visible expression, and to a certain extent succeeds in attaining it. Hence, in discussing the subject, it will be proper to consider each of the predicates in question, firstly, as it inheres in its subject, the true Church, and then as it expresses itself in each or the whole of the particular societies

which make up the visible Church. The fourth property, Apostolicity, does not here fall under consideration, for there are only two senses in which a Church can be said to be an Apostolic one—either as holding and teaching Apostolical doctrine, and then Apostolicity means the pure preaching of the Word, or as possessing a ministry derived from the Apostles, whatever may be the nature of the derivation; and questions relating to the ministry are reserved for subsequent treatment. A few words may be premised on the origin and import of these predicates. Two only of them, Unity and Sanctity, are derived directly from Scripture, unless we may trace the term Apostolical to Ephes. ii. 20, where St. Paul describes Christians as 'built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets.' The unity of the Church is described in the well-known passage of the same Epistle: 'There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all' (c. iv. 4–6); and its sanctity in a subsequent passage: 'Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish' (c. v. 26–27). The term Catholic, on the contrary, came into use subsequently to the Apostolic age. In modern ecclesiastical language it means universal, and, as applied to the Church, its capability of universal

diffusion, as contrasted with Judaism, which was confined to one people and country. But it is matter of doubt whether this was the primary meaning of the word, and not rather that of organic unity, or of a whole (ὅλον),[1] consisting of various parts, which have no proper existence independently of that of which they are parts, as, for example, the limbs and organs of the human body. It was not, therefore, so much from opposition to Judaism as to heresy, the principle of division, that the Church first received the title of Catholic, as we may gather from perhaps the earliest use of the word. 'Wheresoever,' writes Ignatius to the Smyrnæans, 'the bishop shall be seen, there let the people be also; as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.' With Ignatius, the bishop is in each Church the organ and representative of Christ, the centre of unity to all the believers in that locality, without whom the Church has no proper existence.[2] This view of the episcopal office he illustrates from the relation between Christ and the Catholic Church—that is, between the head and the body; and this, apparently, is what he means by the word Catholic.[3] Be this as it

[1] ὅλος is distinguished from ἅπας, as *totus* is from *omnis* in Latin, or the *whole* from *all* in English. The whole army conveys a different idea from all the men of the army.

[2] Χωρὶς τούτων (the bishop with his presbyters and deacons) ἐκκλησία οὐ καλεῖται.—Ad Trail.

[3] This passage of Ignatius may be cited as an instance of the embarrassments attending all theories of the true Church which make it a visibly-organised body, and yet reject the dogma of the Papacy. The Protestant, understanding by the Catholic Church the mystical body of Christ, fully endorses the statement that 'where Christ is, there is the Catholic Church,' which is nothing more than saying that where the

may, in later writers the Church is called Catholic as much to distinguish it from sects as to express its universality. Thus, excluding Apostolicity, there remain three distinct attributes of the body of Christ—unity, sanctity, and universality. Of these, however, only the first two concern the differences between Romanists and Protestants, for the catholicity of the Church is acknowledged on both sides—the Protestant Confessions being careful to disavow any countenance to the Donatists, who held that the Catholic Church, having disappeared from the rest of the world, was confined to their own sect.[1] Hence Bellarmine, in making catholicity a note of the Church, is driven to insist, not upon the thing itself, but upon the name of Catholic, which he endeavours to appropriate to his own communion.

(1) The unity of the Church is a predicate which admits of a variety of interpretations. Bellarmine's remarks are to the point: 'The unity of the Church is manifold, as, firstly, the unity of efficient cause, viz., God's calling; secondly, the unity of scope or final end, viz., eternal salvation; thirdly, the unity of means, viz., faith, the sacraments, and the ordinances; fourthly, the

Head is there is the body. But the Catholic Church of Ignatius was, as appears from his comparing it with a visible local Church under its bishop, one visible society; and where was he to find a visible centre of unity standing in the same relation to the whole Church in which the bishop did to each local Church? In the time of Ignatius no such visible head existed (and, we may add, *never* has existed), and hence he makes Christ the centre of unity, an invisible Head to a visible and mixed body, to the obvious damage of the theory.

[1] 'Damnamus ergo Donatistas qui ecclesiam in nescio quos Africæ coarctabant angulos.'—1 Conf. Helv., c. 17.

unity of the Spirit, by whom (*ut externo et separato rectore*) the whole Church is governed; fifthly, the unity of the same Head, viz., Christ and His vicar, the Pontiff; and, sixthly, the unity of the members with each other and with the Head. Of these unities those which properly make the Church one are the last two, viz., subordination of the members to one Head and their union with each other.'[1] Unity, in the sense of oneness, or oneliness, may be more properly termed the exclusiveness of the Church; and indeed it is evident that there can be but one holy Catholic Church, two universal Churches being a contradiction in terms. Moreover, Romanists and Protestants agree in the abstract statement that out of the Catholic Church there is, by covenant, no salvation. On neither side, again, is it denied that persons may be saved to whom the Gospel has never been made known. They must be pronounced 'strangers to the covenant of promise,' but, on the other hand, recorded instances and general intimations of Scripture encourage a hope that, in their exuberance, the mercies of God may be extended beyond the limits of revelation. In such cases, however, it is not *by* but '*in* the law or sect that every man professeth,' that he is saved, if saved he be (Art. XVIII.); it is by the merits of Christ imputed to him in some way accordant with Divine wisdom, but unknown to us. No sooner, however, do we proceed to ask, *What* is that Catholic Church out of which

[1] De Eccles. Mil., c. 5. With respect to the other unities he remarks: 'Per primam ecclesia non est tam una quam ex uno; per secundam, non tam est una quam ad unum; per tertiam, non tam est una quam per unum; per quartam, non tam est una quam sub uno.'

there is no salvation? than the difference between the Romanist and the Protestant conception of the Church makes itself felt. Out of that Church, which is the body of Christ, those who are in living union with Him, the Protestant admits, that there is no covenanted salvation; for this is, in fact, the Church of the saved. But by the exclusiveness of the Church in the Romish sense is meant that the one Christian communion that acknowledges the supremacy of the Pope is the treasure-house of covenanted grace; and that it matters not how sincere may be the faith which relies on the words of Christ and his Apostles, or how fruitful it may be in good works, if these evidences of religion are not found within a certain sacred enclosure, they forfeit their value. On the other hand, however destitute a man be of saving faith and barren in the practical fruits of religion, if only he be within the consecrated pale he is a member of Christ, and as such enjoys the privileges of Christ's body.[1] In this, however, as in other instances, that Christian feeling, which no theory can wholly extinguish, interposes to mitigate the rigour of the dogma, and various charitable pleas—such as that of invincible ignorance—have been admitted to make it possible to believe that salvation may elsewhere be found.

The readers of the earlier Fathers will not be slow to perceive that the doctrine of Rome is but the development of principles which had been long germinating

[1] 'Hoc quidem bono non privantur (mali) ut hujus corporis membra esse desinant.'—Cat. Rom., P. i. c. 10.

in the Church. Some remarkable passages from Cyprian and Augustine bearing on the point have been cited in Chapter I., and it is not necessary to adduce more. The dogma grew up as follows: The first contests which disturbed the peace of the Church were with heretics rather than schismatics. Hence the first polemical writers, Irenæus and Tertullian, insist chiefly on the historical continuity of doctrine in the Churches founded by the Apostles, and its contrariety with heretical novelties, a line of argument which was both natural and allowable; they were justified in appealing from subjective notions (αἱρέσεις) to the objective historical faith of the Church as it had always been held. Afterwards the field of strife changed, and the Church had to deal with cases which were schismatical rather than heretical, in which the faith on both sides was the same, but the separatists had renounced the communion of the Church. Such were the Novatian and Donatist schisms. Neither of these sects appears to have denied any article of the Catholic faith, and, what was more embarrassing, they retained the episcopal form of government. Hence Cyprian, the opponent of the former, and Augustine, the opponent of the latter, were compelled to shift the argument from doctrine to polity, and polity transmitted in a certain historical line. To have admitted that orthodox belief and an episcopal regimen were sufficient bonds of union, would have left no distinction between themselves and the dissident communities; they added, therefore, that there must be communion with the Catholic bishop who could trace his

spiritual ancestry back to the Apostles. 'It is rightly affirmed,' says Cyprian, 'that the Holy Spirit is not received save in the Catholic Church.' Both these eminent Fathers seem to have held that a sacramental efficacy belongs to communion with the Catholic bishop, imparting to religious acts an acceptableness in the sight of God which otherwise they did not possess. Schismatical baptism, though not to be repeated, conveyed no grace; and what seemed to be fruits of the Spirit were but counterfeit imitations. What Scripture and the moral sense would recognise as faith or charity lose their quality because the ecclesiastical standing is wanting. Not the object (Christ) to which faith is directed imparts to the latter its Christian character, but the visible inclosure in which faith is exercised. The Word may be purely preached, the Sacraments duly administered, the evidences of the Holy Spirit's work unmistakable, but all this goes for nothing so long as it does not take place on consecrated ground. Akin to this notion is the theory that makes the Church a school of discipline for the renovation of fallen humanity, after the pattern of the Mosaic institute. 'The oneness or exclusiveness of the Church,' we are told by one who afterwards followed the theory to its natural home, 'is necessary, because in no other body is there the divinely-adjusted discipline for the will of man. The plastic energy by which the character of Christ is remoulded in the moral nature is baffled for want of the organic structure through which the fitness and harmony of moral truth prescribe its

action, just as the animal life fails of throwing out the highest forms of health where the bodily organisation is maimed or wanting.' Again, 'The two generic forms in which sins exhibit themselves are usurpation upon the majesty of God and usurpation upon the rights of other men. What is needed, then, is a power to subdue and to repress the human will; and this the Church provides. By her authority, as God's vicar on the earth, she subjugates the whole energy of man, which struggles against the will of God. By her inward discipline she checks, and through grace subdues to the conscience, the aggressive and importunate affections of our nature;' and much more to the same effect.[1] This false notion that the Church is primarily a visible institution, a moral factory in which men are placed by the initiatory Sacrament to be disciplined into the image of Christ, a mould in which human nature in its crude state is to be poured and compressed in order to emerge a new creation, lies at the root of the patristic statements on the exclusiveness of the Church. If the mould be ever so little varied, the casting comes out defective in some of its features. There may be, it is confessed, a work of grace outside the Church, but it will be wanting in some of the undefinable saintly lineaments of the Catholic Christian. The piety of separatists may be sincere, and even in some respects appear superior to the same piety within the sacred inclosure, but because it has not come in by the door, but climbed up some other way, its mystical

[1] Manning, 'Unity,' &c., pp. 243, 250–251.

perfection cannot be quite the same. Some defect will prove that it was planted and grew up on foreign ground. That the great gift of Christ to His Church, the Holy Spirit, the Divine Agent in quickening and sanctifying its members, should practically, if not theoretically, disappear from the theory, was inevitable.

The proper organic unity of the Church—that is, as Bellarmine describes it, the connection of the members with one head and with each other—comes next under consideration, and with it some remarks on the origin and extension of episcopacy, the third order of the Christian ministry in the form which has usually prevailed in the Church. Its connection with the present topic seems to justify this arrangement, notwithstanding that episcopacy might seem to claim a place in the early stages of Church polity, as one of the subjects of Chapter IV. But, in fact, the derivation of the polity of the Church from the synagogue ceases with the orders of presbyters and deacons, and episcopacy was the first step towards ecclesiastical organisation on a basis independent of the Jewish economy. By the early Fathers, too, whatever other functions or prerogatives they may connect with episcopacy, its office of representing the unity of the Church is insisted on with peculiar emphasis. While presbyters and deacons are but congregational officers, the episcopate was divinely instituted, not only to be a centre of unity to each Church, but, as far as could be in those times, to unite the Churches of Christendom into one body. So Ignatius impresses on his correspondents: 'It is

fitting that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment, and that, being subject to your bishop and the presbyters, ye may be wholly sanctified; it is evident that we ought to look upon the bishop even as we would upon the Lord Himself.'[1] 'I exhort you that ye study to do all things in a Divine concord, your bishop presiding in the place of God. Be subject to your bishop and to one another, as Jesus Christ to the Father according to the flesh.'[2] 'Whereas ye are subject to the bishop as to Jesus Christ, ye appear to me to live not after the manner of men, but according to Jesus Christ. It is therefore necessary that without your bishop you should do nothing.'[3] 'I cried, while I was among you, Attend to the bishop, and to the presbytery, and to the deacons. Now some supposed that I spake this as foreseeing the divisions that should come among you. But He is my witness for whose sake I am in bonds, that I knew nothing from any man, but the Spirit spake, saying in this wise, Do nothing without the bishop, love unity, flee divisions.'[4] 'See ye all follow your bishop as Jesus Christ the Father. Let no man do anything of what belongs to the Church separately from the bishop. Wheresoever the bishop shall appear, there let the people also be, as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church.'[5] According to Cyprian, the episcopate is a continuation of the Apostolate, the Catholic bishops being the successors

[1] Ad Ephes., 2, 6.
[2] Ad Magnes., 6, 13.
[3] Ad Trall. 2.
[4] Ad. Phil., 7.
[5] Ad. Smyrn., 8.

of the inspired twelve and inheritors of their powers, those only excepted which were peculiar to them as inspired persons. As the Apostles, then, while they lived formed a bond of union for the whole Church —Christian societies, otherwise distinct communities, being connected together by their common relation to the Apostolic college—so the one undivided episcopate, which has succeeded to the Apostolate, unites the whole of Christendom; each bishop, besides his local, possessing ecumenical authority, not as an individual, but as a member of the episcopate. Such is the meaning of the well-known passage, 'Episcopatus unus est cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur,' the abstract office having in the bishop of each particular Church its organ and representative.

That episcopacy should by these writers be spoken of as of Divine institution, is only what might have been expected. As part of the polity which is supposed to be of the essence of the Church, it claims this character; but besides what it has in common with the other two orders, it possesses an importance peculiar to itself. Of the three it is the most indispensable.[1] The bishop is to each believer the representative of Christ, the organ through which covenanted grace is derived to him. More important still is the privilege which he only possesses of furnishing the Church with pastors; presbyters may spiritually generate the sons

[1] 'Sacrosancta synodus declarat præter cæteros ecclesiasticos gradus, episcopos qui in Apostolorum locum successerunt, ad hunc hierarchicum ordinem præcipue pertinere.'—Conc. Trid., xxiii. c. 4.

of God, but presbyters themselves can only be generated by the bishop. He is in each Church the symbol and centre of unity. Moreover, the coercive power of the Church as a training school, which must be lodged somewhere, is committed to the bishop, whose authority is both legislative and executive. It follows, as a matter of course, that where there is no bishop there is no covenanted grace, no legitimate ministry, no full benefit from the Sacraments. Whatever exceptions and allowances are admitted, they are made at the expense of logical consistency; for if a certain form of polity is essential, its absence must occasion serious injury; just as the mutilation of the human body in any of its members inflicts a loss which cannot be fully repaired.

We turn to Scripture to ascertain whether at all, or to what extent, it sanctions these pretensions. The analogy of the synagogue fails us; the theory that the Apostles shed off, in due time, the episcopal office to successors rests on no Scriptural ground;[1] where, then, is the Scripture evidence? The fact is, diocesan episcopacy does not appear in the New Testament. The terms episcopus and presbyter are in St. Paul's Epistles applied to the same persons. The meaning of the angels in the first chapters of the Apocalypse is too uncertain to found any conclusion upon. That Christ Himself intended to establish a disparity between ministers has been argued from the twofold mission of the twelve and the seventy, in which Bishop J. Taylor finds prototypes of bishops and presbyters;[2] bishops

[1] See chap. vi.

[2] 'Episcopacy Asserted,' s. 6.

without a diocese and presbyters without a church. In point of fact, the instructions issued to the twelve and the seventy, and the powers conferred upon them respectively, are identical. Either body was commissioned to prepare the way for Christ's own ministry; upon either a similar power of performing miraculous cures was conferred, and to either the Divine presence was equally assured. That directions touching Church polity formed part of Christ's instructions during the forty days is a mere surmise. A greater semblance of probability is furnished by the missions of Timothy and Titus to Ephesus and Crete respectively; but in truth it is only a semblance. Timothy and Titus belonged to a company of friends and associates of St. Paul in his labours, whom he attached to his person, and who were intimately acquainted with his sentiments on religious matters. Silas, Tychicus, Lucas, Epaphroditus, Marcus, are also mentioned as members of this inner circle. As the sphere of the Apostle's labours extended itself, and the number of Churches standing in a peculiar relation to him as their founder increased, it became more and more difficult for him, in order to supply what might be wanting in doctrine or organisation, to visit these Churches in person. Epistolary correspondence could only imperfectly supply the need. Accordingly, at an early period of his ministry he appears to have employed these disciples, as it were staff-officers, to represent him here and there as circumstances required. Whithersoever they came they appeared as delegates of the Apostle and invested

with his authority; but, like the Apostles themselves, they were never permanently fixed in one place. As soon as they had finished the business of their mission, they returned to the Apostle, who either retained them in attendance on himself, or sent them to some other Church needing their presence. Such surely is the impression conveyed by such passages as the following: 'These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly; but if I tarry, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God. Till I come, give attendance to reading,' &c.[1] St. Paul apparently was not able to fulfil his intention, and so adopting the other alternative, he urges Timothy to complete his task as soon as possible and to repair to Rome: 'Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me, for Demas is departed to Thessalonica, Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.'[2] So to Titus at Crete: 'When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis, for I have determined there to winter.'[3] The commissions evidently were temporary; and nothing more can be founded on these cases than that it is not at variance with Apostolic precedent that, whether for a longer or a shorter time, the chief authority in a Church should be confided to a single person; and so far as this favours the episcopal regimen, *valeat quantum*. They do not warrant us in inferring that St. Paul meant to establish a new order of diocesan ministers.

Eusebius tells us that a tradition existed that

[1] 1 Tim. iii. 15; iv. 13. [2] 2 Tim. iv. 9–10. [3] Titus iii. 12.

Timothy and Titus did become formal bishops of Ephesus and Crete; and it is probable that, after the Apostle's death, when episcopacy became general, they were invited to assume the office in those Churches to which they were well known; but this cannot be proved from the New Testament. That St. James, the brother of our Lord, exercised some kind of presidency in the Church of Jerusalem may be gathered from the way in which he is mentioned in the Book of Acts; but what the nature of it was, and whether it was official or (as is most probable) personal, is not told us. Independently of this lack of Scripture evidence, there are strong reasons for supposing that episcopacy proper dates from a period subsequent to the destruction of the Jewish temple, at which time the leading Apostles, with the exception of St. John, had gone to their rest. While they lived, and could exercise a supervision of the Churches, either personally or by means of their delegates, they could hardly have seen the necessity of extending the polity of the Church beyond what the synagogue had suggested; to which we may add the reluctance they felt, as the history proves, to dissever themselves from the Divinely-appointed Mosaic system and its appendages, which would naturally indispose them to advance beyond these limits. But the destruction of the temple, A.D. 70, gave a deathblow to the hopes which Jewish converts might have entertained of seeing ceremonial Judaism and Christianity combined into one system. By that great event the Divine Author of the elder economy declared with a voice

which could not be mistaken, that, having fulfilled its purpose, it had come to an end, and in so doing had left the ground free for the new religion to pursue its independent course. The connection between the Law and the Gospel was not spiritually severed, for both Jewish and Gentile converts acknowledged the Old Testament Scriptures as 'the place where the Lord lay' in type and prophecy, and indeed for a time had no other written Word; but as a legal institution the shadow made way for the substance, and the latter was at liberty to pursue its own way. We have every reason to conclude that diocesan episcopacy did not come into being before A.D. 70, but that soon after that date it began, at least in its rudimentary forms, to prevail in the Church.

Its natural history may without difficulty be traced. In the passage from Ephes. iv. above cited, St. Paul, besides inculcating the duty of Christian unity, specifies the particulars in which, as a matter of fact, Christians are one: 'There is one body and one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.' However Christians might fall short of acting up to their duty, they actually are one in the points mentioned.[1] The union of Christians with each other follows from their being individually and collectively the temple of the Holy Ghost: 'That they all,' is Christ's prayer, 'may be one, as Thou,

[1] It is to be noted that the other Sacrament, the Eucharist, though emphatically the Sacrament of unity, is not mentioned, and that on matters of polity the Apostle is silent.

Father, art in Me and I in Thee.'[1] But the union of the Father and the Son is a spiritual one, invisible to man. And yet he adds, 'that the world may know that Thou hast sent me.' However primarily the union of Christians is spiritual and inward, there must be visible tokens of its presence. And so there were from the first. The outpouring of the Spirit was immediately followed by a remarkable exhibition of Christian sympathy and love towards the needy brethren,[2] and this did not confine itself to the infant Church of Jerusalem. The members of the many Christian Churches throughout the Roman Empire had possibly never seen each other in the flesh, but this did not interfere with their fellow-feeling with their Christian brethren everywhere. Besides formal intercommunion, the Apostolic test of spiritual life, 'If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it,' was fully satisfied. St. Paul could commend the Churches of Macedonia for their forwardness to assist the poor saints of Jerusalem, and exhorts the Corinthian Church to follow the example.[3] With surprise and admiration the heathen beheld a new fellowship which they could not understand, embracing men of every race and language, and which no severity of persecution could impair. Thus in each Church and the Churches collectively Christ's prayer that the world might have visible evidence of the effect of the Gospel received in faith was from the first fulfilled, and has never quite failed of fulfilment. But the

[1] John xvii. 21. [2] Acts ii. 44. [3] 2 Cor. viii.

enemy was at hand to sow tares among the wheat. Schismatical tendencies, even in the Apostles' lifetime, appeared here and there, as we learn from the state of the Corinthian Church[1] and the later Epistles of St. Paul. Apostolical authority, as long as it existed, might avail to check the evil, but when it was removed the danger became imminent. The divisions among Christians not only injured their own personal religion, but gave occasion to the heathen, as they do in modern missions, to decline accepting a faith which seemed incapable of freeing itself from this blot. To apply a remedy, as far as it lay in man's power, to the evil must have lain near the heart of all who cared for religion; and to this, in itself, laudable anxiety the best informed and most candid of the Fathers refer the origin of Episcopacy. The judgment of Jerome has never been refuted: 'Before there were factions in religion, and the people began to say, I am of Paul, I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, the Churches were governed by a common council of presbyters. But when every man thought those whom he had baptized to be his own, and not Christ's, it was decreed throughout the world that one chosen out of the presbyters should be set above the rest, to whom the whole care of the Church should appertain, that thus the seeds of division might be rooted out.'[2] Jerome does not say by whom it was decreed, nor what he means by that expression, still less that it was decreed by the Apostles. There was no need of any such Apostolic

[1] 1 Cor. i.

[2] Quoted by Bilson, 'Perp. Gov.,' &c., p. 268.

precept. The simple fact was that the original government by a college of elders was no longer able to cope with the difficulties occasioned by the waning of the first love of Christians, the dissensions of rival parties, and the strange perversions of doctrine which began to appear. The Church herself, in the exercise of the Christian liberty vouchsafed to her, and on grounds of common sense and experience, provided what she thought the best means of meeting the emergeney. The ground, indeed, was afterwards shifted. Actuated by a sincere desire to promote Christian unity, Ignatius, Irenæus, Cyprian, and their followers in later ages, yielded to the temptation to enforce an unquestionable duty by arguments from illicit sources. The threefold ministry of the Church was held to be prefigured by the high-priest, priests, and Levites of the elder dispensation; obedience to the bishop was obedience to Christ; disobedience the breach of a Divine law; the Church became a legal institution, and covenanted grace was alone to be found within an external polity. The principle that everything of ancient date, but to which no ascertainable origin could be assigned, must have proceeded from the Apostles, covered all deficiency of evidence. It was forgotten that even if episcopacy could be proved to be of Apostolic origin, this does not of itself make it of Divine appointment and absolutely binding. Its apologists, even in modern times, have sometimes fallen into the same error,[1] and not only

[1] Thus Bishop Hall indites a treatise which he calls 'Episcopacy by Divine Right,' but all that he establishes is that it was probably

Episcopalians but Presbyterians also. The Divine right of Presbyterianism has figured as prominently as that of Episcopacy. The Apostles were, no doubt, supernaturally withheld from making even their unquestionable appointments binding on every age of the Church, else why has the decision of the Conference at Jerusalem, declared to be inspired by the Holy Ghost, that the Gentile converts should abstain from things strangled and from blood,[1] been, by the application of certain principles laid down in St. Paul's Epistles,[2] set aside, in the Western Church at least? Why have the anointing of the sick with oil (not as a viaticum, but for their recovery), the kiss of charity, the primitive love-feast, been either abandoned or modified? An instance of an order, certainly Apostolic, yet no longer formally existing in the Church, is that of deaconesses. The view which a modern writer takes of this subject will probably commend itself to candid inquirers, viz., that Apostolic arrangements, being those of inspired men, must have been the best for the time being, and under the then existing circumstances.[3] As long, therefore,

Apostolical. In another work, however, he does seem to recognise the distinction between a Divine law and an Apostolical precedent: 'Let me beseech the reader to consider seriously of this difference, in the mistaking of which I have not unjustly suffered, and to remember how I have expressed it in my "Remonstrance," fetching the pedigree of episcopacy from Apostolical (and therefore in that right Divine) institution, and interpreting myself, not to understand by "Divine right" any express law of God requiring it upon the absolute necessity of the being of a Church, but an institution of Apostles, warranting it where it is, and requiring it where it may be had.'—Defence of the Humble Remonstrance.

[1] Acts xv. [2] Rom. xiv.; 1 Cor. viii.; Col. ii. 16–23.

[3] Hinds, 'History of Christianity.' Part iii. c. ii.

as no reason appears for a change, what was best for the Apostolic age may be supposed best for ours. It is not easy, for example, to conceive that the office of presbyter, including teaching and administration, can ever be dispensed with in the Church; it possesses, therefore, a *relative* importance and claim to continuity. Needlessly to break the chain which connects us with Apostolic precedent may be a sin, greater or less according to circumstances, but it is not the sin of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Diocesan episcopacy does not stand on quite the same footing of Scripture evidence as the two inferior orders; yet if there is reason to believe that it must have received the sanction of the last survivor of the Apostles, St. John, and that it is in itself a wise institution, it too, *in the abstract*, may claim not to be lightly abandoned. In the abstract, because it cannot be denied that it may, and has in fact, become associated with parasitical accretions, which are hardly in harmony with the spirit of Apostolical Christianity. Secular rank, the concentration of legislative power in one order of Christian ministers, a hierarchical spirit, the demand for greater deference than spiritual or intellectual endowments would seem to justify, have not unfrequently operated injuriously. But such things are separable accidents which do not affect the substance. An episcopacy, properly limited, may with certainty be pronounced to be not inconsistent with Apostolic precedent.

To sum up:—Episcopacy sprang from the Church itself, and yet seems to have received the sanction of

the last of the living Apostles. To meet the dangers of division and false doctrine, an informal episcopacy of some kind seems to have arisen at an early period by a spontaneous movement in each Church rather than by Apostolic enactment; or, as Jerome expresses it, 'rather by the custom of the Church than by the Lord's disposition.'[1] They form but a low estimate of the inherent forces of Christianity who deem it necessary to allege a Divine prescription for the forms into which the Church of the age succeeding that of the Apostles threw itself, including episcopacy. Even Romish theologians of the higher class, such as Möhler, have learned to view the matter otherwise. `We need not refuse assent to his remark that 'the craving of the faithful in Christ for union cannot rest satisfied until it sees itself expressed in some type or representation. The bishop is the visible expression of this longing—the personification of the mutual love of Christians of a certain locality—the manifestation and the living centre of that Christian spirit which ever strives after unity.'[2] That is, in other words, the Church developed her ritual and polity by force of the life within, under Apostolic guidance or sanction. For the particular extension of it in question the historical argument is this: When we open the remains, say, of the fourth century, we find, whether in the Church or the dissident bodies, episcopacy universally prevailing. The same

[1] 'Episcopi noverint se magis consuetudine quam dispositionis Dominicæ veritate presbyteris esse majores.'—In Tit., c. i. verse 5. See Bilson, 'Perp. Gov.,' &c., c. xii.

[2] Einheit in d. Kirch., p. 187.

fact meets us in every preceding century up to a time when one at least of the Apostles was surviving. We examine the inspired volume, and if no positive evidence for this third order of ministers is thence forthcoming, there is nothing to lead to a conclusion that it is unscriptural. We can value and maintain it, but we cannot say that it is essential to the being of a Church, or even that a Church cannot be perfect without it.

The subsequent and still more comprehensive forms of unity followed the same law of natural expansion. If the Christians of a certain locality were led to unite round a visible centre, neighbouring Churches felt the same impulse to associate themselves together, and this not merely by casual intercourse, but through recognised organs. The bishop's office began to assume the double character which appears in the pages of Cyprian, ecumenical as well as local. Nothing was more natural than that the bishops who resided within a reasonable distance of each other should, from time to time, assemble for the purposes of recognition and consultation, on which occasions they were commonly accompanied by delegates from the presbyters and laity. This was the origin of synods. Nor did the centralising process stop here. As the presbyters of each Church (with, no doubt, lay assessors) formed a Council presided over by the bishop, so it was natural that the bishops should develop from themselves a centre of unity, accidental circumstances—such as a Church having been founded by an Apostle, or its importance in a political point of view—determining where the centre should be. Thus

it was that Metropolitan Sees grew up. The beneficial results of the arrangement are obvious. As in differences arising between a presbyter and his flock, the former was either disowned or supported by his colleagues, with the bishop at their head, so by the union of bishops under the Metropolitan individual eccentricities were kept in check, while, on the other hand, the authority of each bishop in his own diocese was strengthened by the sympathy and countenance of the whole episcopate. In the work of appointing a bishop to a vacant see the advantage would be particularly apparent. The election of the new bishop proceeding, according to the custom of those times, from the whole Church, it was far from impossible that the choice might fall upon an undesirable person, faction or the popular voice prevailing against the opinion of those best qualified to judge. The danger was obviated by the rule that two or three, at least, of the neighbouring bishops, and always the Metropolitan, should assist at the consecration, and that no appointment should be deemed valid unless ratified by the other Churches of the province, such approval being testified by the transmission to the new bishop of formal letters of communion, termed *epistolæ communicatoriæ*. The metropolitan circles of unity soon expanded further. Christianity knowing no local limits, there was no reason why the process of consolidation should not advance until stopped by political impediments. As long as the Roman Empire held together no such impediment existed. Hence we find provinces coalesc-

ing into patriarchates, the three leading Churches of Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria assuming this position. Later on, Rome, the capital of the empire, and the scene of the labours and martyrdom of the Apostles Peter and Paul, takes the lead in ecclesiastical as once in political affairs; the Roman patriarch becomes invested, by tacit consent and the custom of the Church with an undefined precedency in the councils of Christendom. Even in the age of Cyprian the idea of a visible centre for the whole Church had made its appearance. 'The Church,' he writes, 'one and Catholic, is knit and compacted together by the mutual adhesion of a cemented .priesthood (*i.e.* episcopate); as the one Church has been divided by Christ into many members throughout the world, so the one episcopate is everywhere diffused by the harmonious multiplicity of many bishops.'[1] Nor was this mere theory. When distance prevented the personal intercourse of bishops, the defect was supplied by epistolary correspondence; and no event occurred in any part of the Christian world but it was communicated to the whole Church. The Churches of Lyons and Vienna, in describing the sufferings of their martyrs, address themselves to 'the brethren in Asia and Phrygia, having the same faith and the same hope of redemption with themselves.'[2] The opposition which Cornelius, the legitimate Bishop of Rome, met with from Novatian and his followers excited a lively interest at Carthage. 'The chair of St. Peter,' writes Cyprian, 'having been

[1] Epist. 69, ad Flor. Pup. Epist. 52, ad Anton. [2] Euseb., v. c 1.

filled according to the will of God, and the appointment having been confirmed by the assent of us all' (the whole episcopate), 'whosoever shall now attempt to intrude himself into it must of necessity be outside the pale of the Church; for he has not the Church's ordination who does not hold the Church's unity.'[1] Excommunication by any Church shut the offender out from the communion of the Church universal. Paul of Samosata having impugned the divinity of Christ, immediately, as Eusebius tells us, 'the pastors of the neighbouring Churches came together from every quarter as against a destroyer of Christ's flock, and convoked an assembly at Antioch, and this arch-heretic was excommunicated from the whole Catholic Church under heaven.'[2] The decision of the Council was communicated to the bishops of Rome and Alexandria, 'and their fellow-ministers, bishops, presbyters, and deacons throughout the world,' and it was signified that a new bishop had been appointed in Paul's stead, and requested that letters of fellowship (*γράμματα κοινωνικὰ*) might be transmitted on both sides. Corrupt as it was in many particulars, justice has not been done to the Christianity of those ages in the point before us. A vast association, extending over the Roman Empire and beyond it, maintained its ground not only without the aid, but against the hostility, of the State; pervaded through all its parts by a sympathy which to the heathen statesman and philosopher must have been inexplicable. Still some-

[1] Epist. 52, ad Anton.

[2] Lib. vii. c. 30.

thing was wanting. Why should not the whole Church have a living centre and bond of union? Things, as we have seen, were already tending in that direction. And regarded merely as the ecclesiastical centre of Western Christendom, it must be admitted that there is nothing in the mere primacy of the Bishop of Rome positively anti-Christian. If it was not so for the faithful of a diocese to gather round a bishop, or for the bishop of a province to evolve out of themselves a metropolitan centre, no more was it for the episcopate of an empire or of the universal Church to favour the growth of a living centre of unity which should bind together the whole body. The prayer of Christ, 'that they all may be one, that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me,' had been partially fulfilled; why should not the topmost stone be added to the edifice? To refer the Papacy of the Middle Ages to a Satanic origin is as wide of the truth as to make it an institution of Christ Himself; it was the result of natural causes, and can lay no claim to a supernatural origin, save in so far as the love of Christians to each other is not a fruit of this world. Every successive step from the commencement to the completion of the Church system may be traced in history, and, as in all human manifestations of the Holy Spirit's operation, good and evil are found mixed together. The successive Popes as much obeyed as they led public feeling; Western Christendom was as ready to confer on the Bishop of Rome supreme power, temporal as well as spiritual, as he was to receive the fatal boon. De Maistre has reminded Protestants that

where there is on one side a voluntary surrender of rights, it is idle to talk of usurpation on the other.[1] If Churches were willing that unlimited spiritual power should be lodged in the hands of a single bishop, and emperors content to hold their dominions as fiefs of Rome, we can hardly wonder if the Holy See did not feel itself bound to refuse the proffered dignity, or to remind its suitors of the primitive equality of bishops, and of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom: especially when, to a pious mind, surveying the disorders of the age, it might seem that no remedy for these disorders was more likely to succeed than a central authority, feeble in a temporal point of view, but wielding spiritual weapons before which the haughtiest princes must bow. The disapprobation with which we must view the language and actions of certain Popes will be mitigated if we remember that they were but men, and that their position was one of peculiar difficulty and temptation. In short, regarding the Papacy as the natural result of ecclesiastical tendencies, as the visible symbol of the unity of the Church, as a sheltering fence against heresy and anarchy, we can neither feel surprised at its appearance, nor refuse to recognise in it a permissive dispensation which Providence made subservient to its purposes.

The present state of Christendom is not unlikely, in view of our Lord's prayer, to awaken searchings of heart among serious Christians. Partly owing to providential

[1] Du Pape, Lib. ii. c. 6.

dispensations, and partly to the scandalous abuses that prevailed in the sixteenth century, the Church has become an aggregate of Christian societies, independent of each other, acknowledging no common visible centre, and sometimes not even in intercommunion with each other. The providential dispensations were the breaking up of the Roman Empire into the two great divisions of East and West, and of the western portion into the kingdoms of modern Europe. The new-born feeling of national life thus called forth could not fail, sooner or later, to evoke a spirit of resistance to the encroachments, ever advancing, of the Roman See. Nations began to assert their independent sovereignty; the clergy ceased to be the creatures of a foreign spiritual potentate, and national churches, such as the Gallican in its palmy days, refused unquestioning obedience to the so-called successor of St. Peter. More potent still was the great Reformation, which not only swept away (as the Council of Trent must be admitted to have done) practical abuses, but by a recurrence to the only undoubted Apostolical tradition — the written Word—struck at the root of such abuses, viz., the doctrines from which they sprang as the tree naturally produces its fruit. The Reformers failed to bring about a reformation of doctrine, and found themselves compelled, whether they retained episcopacy or not, to form distinct Christian societies of their own. The result of the whole is, that Christendom is at present incapable of visible organic union. The Church of Rome cuts the knot by appropriating to her own com-

munion alone the predicates of the Creed. And thus undoubtedly she is enabled to effect an organic union of her adherents; but those who, admitting the Romish conception of the Church, stop short of a visible head, cannot predicate organic unity at all of the body. Their unity, at the best, is that of independent communities, perhaps in communion with each other, with one faith, one Lord, one baptism, and possibly *sameness* of polity, but with no central authority. This conception certainly falls short of that which Scripture conveys touching the body of Christ, when it describes it as 'holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.'[1] Here is a true organic unity, but of a spiritual nature. Protestantism solves the difficulty by its doctrine (properly understood) of the invisible Church; Anglo-Catholicism must meet it as best it can. In fact, we cannot refuse assent to the remarks of one who attempted to establish a *via media* position, but in his own opinion completely failed: 'It may possibly be suggested that the universality which the Fathers ascribe to the Catholic Church lay in its Apostolical descent, or, again, in its episcopacy; and that it was one, not as being one kingdom or *civitas*, "at unity with itself," with one and the same intelligence in every part, one sympathy, one ruling principle, one organisation, one communion; but because, though consisting of a number of independent communities at variance (if so be)

[1] Col. ii. 19.

with each other, even to a breach of communion, nevertheless all these were possessed of a legitimate succession of clergy, or all governed by bishops, priests, and deacons. But who will in seriousness maintain that relationship or that resemblance makes two bodies one? England and the United States are from one stock; can they therefore be called one state? England and Ireland are peopled by different races; yet are they not one kingdom still? If unity lies in Apostolical succession, an act of schism is, from the nature of the case, impossible; for as no one can reverse his parentage, so no Church can undo the fact that its clergy have come by lineal descent from the Apostles. Either there is no such sin as schism, or unity does not lie in the episcopal form or in episcopal ordination.'[1] To which we may add a passage bearing on the same point from Möhler's book, 'Unity of the Church': 'Whether the Papacy is to be considered as one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Catholic Church was long doubtful to me; nay, I had taken up the contrary opinion; for the organic combination of the parts into one whole, which the idea of the Catholic Church absolutely requires, seemed fully attained by the unity of the episcopate. But a more comprehensive and deeper consideration of the Scriptural notices of Peter and of history, together with an insight into

[1] Newman, 'Develop.,' p. 258. De Maistre states the same objection more concisely: 'Soutenir qu'une foule d'Eglises indépendantes forment une église une et universelle, c'est soutenir, en d'autres termes, que tous les gouvernements politiques de l'Europe ne forment qu'un seul gouvernement un et universal.'—Du Pape, i. c. 1.

the organisation of the Church, conducted me at length to the doctrine of the Papacy. To stop at the point of progress hitherto attained, the development of the episcopate, would be to leave the development of the Church incomplete. There is wanting to the chain one link, to the building its topstone. If the organisation of the Church be arrested at the point of the episcopate, the ascending series will be suddenly broken off, and the energy that moulds the whole so debilitated as not to be able to perfect the work after the proposed type.'[1] This is placing the matter on its true historical ground. Only a Council which discovered that 'from the very beginning of the Church seven orders of ministry and their names existed,' could have taught that when Christ said to Peter, 'On this rock I will build my Church,' or 'Unto thee will I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven,' He instituted the Papacy. On no occasion in the sacred history is pre-eminence assigned to this Apostle. Clear proof is not forthcoming that he was ever at Rome, or that, if he was, he was Bishop of Rome, still less that he could transmit his personal prerogatives to successors. 'They who require,' is Möhler's conclusion, 'incontrovertible proofs of the existence of the Primacy, require what is unreasonable, the law of a true development not admitting it. And *vice versâ*, the trouble which some have given themselves to discover, before the same epoch, the full idea of a Pope, or the notion that they have discovered it, must be considered as vain,

[1] 'Einheit,' &c., p. 236–237.

and their conclusions untenable. As throughout the inferior organisation of the Church, so in this point the want must be felt before the supply could be found. It is evident that during the first three centuries, and even at the close of them, the primacy is not visible save in the first lineaments: it operates as yet informally; and when the question arises, Where and how did it practically manifest itself? we must confess that it never appears alone, but always in conjunction with other bishops; though it is true that a peculiar character is already seen to attach to the Roman Seë.'[1]

The same remarks apply to episcopacy itself. At what point then, it may be asked, did the system of which Papal Rome is the final result assume a decidedly unscriptural character? The answer is, When to the fact of the chief Patriarchate of that See *the doctrine* of the Roman Pontiff, as laid down at Trent, and expounded by great writers of the Papal communion, was added.[2] The Bishop of Rome was asserted to be *by Divine appointment* the Vicar of Christ and ruler of the whole Church, and the Papacy to be an essential constituent of Christianity. Personal infallibility in faith and morals has lately been ascribed to him. It was competent to Cyprian to meet his opponents at Carthage on the plain Scriptural ground of the evils of schism; it was not competent to him to

[1] 'Einheit,' &c., p. ii. s. 68, 71, pp. 240, 247.

[2] 'De qua re agitur cum de primatu Pontificis agitur? Brevissime dicam; de summâ rei Christianæ.'—Bellarm., Præf. ad L. de S. P.

compare schism with King Uzziah and his attempt. 'He that reigneth on high,' so runs the Bull of Pope Pius against Elizabeth, 'to whom is given all power in heaven and on earth, has committed the one holy Apostolic Church, out of which there is no salvation, to one alone on earth, viz., to Peter, prince of the Apostles, and to the Roman Pontiff, successor of Peter, to be governed with a plenitude of power.' 'We declare, define, and pronounce,' says Boniface VIII., 'that it is necessary to salvation that every human being should be subject to the Roman Pontiff.'[1]

It is worthy of note that, at the commencement of the Reformation, it was not the mere fact of the Roman primacy to which its leaders took exception; they even professed that if the Bishop of Rome would acknowledge that his superiority to other bishops was only by the custom of the Church, they would be willing to leave him in undisturbed possession of it. The passage of Melancthon to that effect is well known: 'Concerning the Roman Pontiff, my opinion is that should he admit the Gospel, the precedence which he has hitherto enjoyed may, to preserve the peace and tranquillity of those who acknowledge his jurisdiction, be by us also accorded to him; but *only jure humano*.'[2] Only *jure humano*; the essence of the controversy lies in those words. It is the Tridentine dogma which Protestantism repudiated, and must ever repudiate. It is not episcopacy (with due limitations), but the dogma connected with it, that it is the channel of

[1] See Barrow, 'Supremacy,' Introd. [2] Art. Smalc. ad fin.

covenanted grace, and therefore essential to the Church, that Protestants must in like manner disavow. To admit it would be to transform the Gospel into a ceremonial law, and to bring us back to the shadows of Judaism. And we may say, of what avail is it to expend time and labour and learning in disproving the dogma of Papal supremacy if the root whence it sprang is left untouched, sure, if that dogma were abandoned, to reproduce it, or something like it? The efflorescence of the disease has been mistaken for the seat of it. If any form of polity, episcopacy, metropolitanism, presbyterianism, &c.; if the distinction between laity and clergy *in kind;* if the regulations of worship and ritual, save in their first rudiments, are held to be *jure divino*, no defensible position can be taken up against the pretensions of Rome.[1]

II.—Sanctity of the Church.

This topic does not demand lengthened consideration. Since, according to the Romish definition, the holy Catholic Church is a visible corporation, comprehending in its idea both good and evil, its sanctity can only be that which does not imply the personal

[1] Chemnitz well states the Protestant rule touching rites and ceremonies: 'Ritus qui Scripturæ consentanei sunt, recte retineri, qui vero cum Scriptura pugnant justo judicio et nullâ temeritate rejici et aboleri. Quod si de adiaphoris ritibus qui cum Scriptura non pugnant quæstio est, simplex et plana est responsio. Si non proponantur *cum opinione necessitatis*, sed tantum ut ordini, decori, et ædificationi, serviant, et cum Christianâ libertate non pugnent, posse de illis statui prout ecclesiæ videbitur convenire.'—Exam. C. T., Part i. loc. i. cap. De Traditionibus, s. 8.

holiness of its members. The Church is holy, as the vessels of the tabernacle were, and, moreover, it administers the sacraments and other means of sanctification. Christ too, the Head, is holy. Thus, the Catechism of Trent affirms, the Creed is to be interpreted. As regards the last reason, if it is meant that the body is holy because and in the same sense in which the Head, Christ, is holy, we acquiesce in the interpretation; for the holiness of the Saviour is not a mere external one, but an actual freedom from all sin. This, however, is not the meaning, and the authors of the Catechism would have been well advised to omit the reference to Christ. Surely there must be a congruity, in kind if not in degree, between the sanctity of the Head and that of the members; the latter must, at least, be delivered from the dominion of sin. It must not be supposed that Protestants hold that Christians can ever in this life be perfect; even an Apostle disclaims any such assumption.[1] They admit that when St. Paul describes the Church as 'a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, holy and without blemish,'[2] he is speaking of what it will be, rather than of what at present it is; but it must be remembered that that future perfection is but the consummation of a work begun here. The child is not a man, but he possesses what will issue in manhood, unless prematurely arrested. The Apostle's language, is, therefore, applicable to the Church even in its present condition; it describes what

[1] Phil. iii. 12.

[2] Ephes. v. 27.

it will be by virtue of what it is; what the seed implanted will grow to hereafter. If it be asked, How does the sanctifying work of the Spirit, which, as such, is invisible, give evidence of its existence? the answer is, Partly by the fruits which it produces in individuals, and partly by the corporate action of the Christian society.

It is a perilous mode of speaking, and not unlikely to lead to universal scepticism, to maintain that the fruits of the Spirit are not of a sufficiently distinctive character to enable us to pronounce where they are and where they are not. The sin of throwing doubts upon the plain work of the Holy Spirit is spoken of in Scripture in terms too awful not to make us tremble at the thought of approaching it. It is on a par with maintaining that we cannot be sure that the miracles of Christ were from God, because Satan or his agents may also work miracles. Those who, like the Pharisees of old, prize themselves on their subtlety in making distinctions must be supposed capable of understanding the great distinction between good and evil. But the Christian society too, by its corporate action, professes itself to be a holy one; that is, by the exercise of discipline. A society which should professedly dispense with discipline and tolerate on principle open evil-doers within its pale cannot be a Christian one; for every particular Church is supposed to be a manifestation, more or less true, of the one true Church, the body of Christ. It is on this ground that the Protestant Confessions generally [1] make discipline

[1] Second part of Homily for Whitsunday.

one of the essential notes of a Church. How essential it is may be seen from the difficulties which its virtual suspension in the Church of England often occasions. That excommunication or any ecclesiastical censures should never be connected with civil penalties is a rule always to be observed. The history of the Inquisition is the best comment on the evil of invoking the secular arm to enforce religious conformity. Unhappily the lesson was not learned at the Reformation, and it is only in recent times that we have come to recognise the uselessness as well as the sin of thus infringing the rights of conscience. A forced conformity is of no value in the sight of God, and ought to be of none in the sight of man. After all that discipline can effect, there will still remain in outward communion with the Church some who are not in communion with Christ.

The Montanist, Novatian, and Donatist schisms sprang from a principle praiseworthy in itself, but pushed beyond the limits of sobriety. These separatists believed that by increasing the rigour of discipline, even to the extent of denying reconciliation to the lapsed, the visible Church might be brought to an identity with the body of Christ; a vain attempt, which recoiled upon its authors and introduced greater disorders and laxity of practice than those it was intended to remedy. Augustine's account of the moral state of the Donatists,[1] its trustworthiness being presumed, conveys a warning example to those who would

[1] 'Africa electa est, ubi purgata massa consideret. Unde ergo tanti greges circumcellionum? Unde tantæ turbæ ebriosorum? et

aim at establishing a perfectly pure visible Church. In contending against the Donatists, Augustine makes a near approach to the Protestant tenet of the invisible Church. It appears from his and Cyprian's accounts of the state of things that discipline had become much relaxed in the Catholic Church, many of openly vicious life being tolerated, lest, if they were visited with censure, they might withdraw and join the ranks of schism.[1] When pressed by the Donatists to explain how a Church which comprised such persons could be called holy, he had recourse to a distinction not between visible Churches and the body of Christ, but in the mode of belonging to the visible Catholic Church. This, according to him, is twofold—real and apparent. 'The wicked,' he says, 'seem to be in the Church, but are not of it.' 'He who is in a state of carnal obduracy, though he may belong to the congregation of saints, is yet ever separate from the unity of that Church which is without spot or wrinkle.'[2] To the Donatist objection that he was thus making two Churches, he replies that this was not the case; that he was only distinguishing between two different states of one and the same Church, its state in the present life and its state in the life to come. 'The Catholics refuted the Donatist calumnies by explaining that they did not mean that the Church, which now contains wicked men within its

innuptarum sed non incorruptarum innumerabilia stupra fœminarum? Unde tanta turba raptorum, avarorum, fæneratorum?'—Cont. Epist. Par., Lib. iii. s. 18.

[1] 'Cum gemitu tolerantur.'—Augustine.

[2] De Bapt. cont. Don., Lib. i. s. 26.

pale, is different from the kingdom of God, in which there is no admixture of evil, but that the same one Holy Catholic Church is now in one condition and hereafter will be in another.'[1]

These passages, and many more that might be cited, exhibit a remarkable approximation to Protestant doctrine; yet there is a difference between them. Augustine speaks of the righteous as 'the soul of the Church,' for 'that is not the body of Christ which shall not reign with Him eternally;' yet he regards the wicked as being also, after their manner, members of the mystical body—members not indeed in the same sense in which the righteous are, but still real members; that is, the true Church is, according to him, a mixed body. Bellarmine, in a passage evidently framed from Augustine, well expresses the sense of that Father: 'Some belong to the body and the soul of the Church, and thus are in union with Christ both inwardly and outwardly; some, again, belong to the soul and not to the body, as pious catechumens; and lastly, some (the wicked) are of the body and not of the soul.'[2] These last are, according to Augustine, real members of the body of Christ, though not so perfectly as the good; and here lies the point of distinction between him and the Reformers. The idea of the body of Christ is not the same to both. Augustine considers it a visible body, external union with which is ordinarily essential to salvation, and of which men may be members (by

[1] Brev. Coll., D. iii. ss. 16–20.

[2] De Eccles. Mil., c. 2.

baptism) without being inwardly sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Protestants hold that it is an invisible body so far as its essence consists in what is not visible, and that the wicked are not merely the least perfect members of Christ, but that (though baptized) they are not members at all. This apparently unimportant difference involves the point in dispute, as appears from the fact that while Bellarmine and other Romish writers strenuously contend against genuine Protestant teaching, they show no hesitation in accepting Augustine's views. They affirm, and justly, that the question is concerning the minimum of qualification requisite to constitute a member of Christ;[1] and, with Augustine, they determine it to be a profession of faith and external reception of the Sacraments, it being a matter of indifference, as regards the point of membership, whether sanctifying grace be present or not.

[1] De Eccles. Mil., c. 2.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

That the Christian ministry in the abstract is of Divine origin is affirmed not less by Protestants than by Romanists. With the following statements of the Confession of Augsburg and the first Helvetic Confession all the Protestant Confessions are in agreement: 'That we may attain to saving faith, the ministry of the Word and Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and the Sacraments, as instruments, the Holy Spirit, the Author of faith, is given. They (the Protestants) condemn the Anabaptists, who think the Holy Spirit is given to men apart from the external Word.'[1] 'God has always employed ministers to establish and govern His Church. He employs them now, and will do so as long as there is a Church upon earth. The origin, therefore, institution, and office of Christian ministers are from God Himself. God could, indeed, by an immediate exercise of His power, gather a Church out of mankind; but He chooses rather to deal with men through the ministry of men.'[2] That as the clergy alone are not the Church, so that is not a Church which has no pastors, is a principle

[1] Conf. Aug., Art. 5.

[2] Conf. Helv., c. 18.

admitted on both sides. It is only, however, thus far that an agreement exists, for when further questions arise, such as, how the ministerial office comes into existence and is perpetuated, and what is the relation in which those invested with the sacred office stand to the other members of the Christian society, grave differences will be found to prevail. It is on these two points, the former of which relates to the doctrine of the Apostolical succession, the latter to the powers of the clergy, that the controversy mainly turns.

1. The Apostolicity of the Church, or of a Church, is a property which belongs to it as a Christian society, for no community can establish its claim to the title of Christian unless there be a substantial agreement between its doctrines and institutions and those of the inspired persons to whom Christ delivered a commission to lay the foundations of the Church. What constitutes a true derivation from the Apostles, and in what manner the latter still preside in every society which claims to be a Christian one, may be matters of controversy; but upon the necessity of an Apostolical succession, in some sense of the words, no difference exists, certainly not between Protestants and Romanists. It has already been observed that while the Protestant makes the succession of doctrine to be the essential point of connection with the Apostles, the Romanist places it in the succession of a ministry derived from the Apostles; the difference in this, as in other particulars, being not absolute

but relative. But the term Apostolicity of ministry is itself ambiguous; it may mean either that the Apostles were the first link in the chain of ministerial succession, a fact which is equally true and insufficient for the Romish theory; or that in a certain line, and in that alone, certain spiritual powers, supposed to be essential to the validity of the means of grace, especially the Sacraments, have been transmitted from the Apostles, the first possessors of these powers, to those who succeeded them. Episcopacy, for example, is considered essential, not in itself, for any form of polity might be the vehicle of transmission, but because it claims to be the chosen one through which the powers are conveyed. In the Donatist schism there were Catholic and Donatist Episcopal Churches, but because the latter could not trace their succession up to the Apostles, they could not communicate to their members the special grace of the Eucharist.

The Romish doctrine of the Apostolical succession, which alone possesses the merit of consistency, is thus set forth in the formularies of Trent: It is a principle everywhere laid down in Scripture that no one may presume to undertake sacerdotal functions without a Divine commission empowering him to do so. The authority of an ambassador to act as such must be derived from the supreme magistrate; otherwise his acts are null and void, and he himself liable to punishment. How much more strictly must we suppose this rule to be observed in the case of those who are the

ambassadors of heaven and stewards of the mysteries of God, the appointed channels of communication between God and man, and the representatives of God upon earth. Among the Jews no man took this honour to himself but he that was called of God as Aaron was; and every attempt on the part of unauthorised persons to invade the priest's office was visited by God with severe penalties. For this offence Korah and his company were destroyed and Uzziah struck with leprosy; for the same Saul was deprived of his kingdom. If this was the case under the old dispensation, how much more reason have we to expect to find it so under the new, seeing the Christian priesthood as much excels the Levitical in dignity as the new law is superior to the old. As regards matter of fact, we find that Christ Himself did not enter on His public ministry until He had been anointed by the Spirit and commissioned thereto by a voice from heaven; and throughout His ministry He is found constantly insisting on His Divine mission, 'the Word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me.' In like manner, when He was about to commit the government of the Church to His Apostles, He gave them a formal commission to exercise the Apostolic office, 'As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.'[1] Thus, divinely commissioned, the Apostles went forth preaching the Gospel; and when Christian societies multiplied and personal superintendence became impossible, they delegated a portion

[1] See note, p. 36.

of their authority to others, transmitting to them at the same time the sacerdotal grace which they themselves had received from Christ. The Apostolic delegates in their turn did the same, and each member of the series receives at his ordination or consecration both the commission and the powers which belonged to his predecessors. The power or grace thus transmitted is twofold—a power of order and a power of jurisdiction. By the former is meant the power of consecrating, offering, and ministering the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist; by the latter, the power of absolution, which is concerned with the guidance and government of the mystical body of Christ. These powers were conferred on the Apostles on different occasions; they were made priests and received the power of order when Christ at the Last Supper delivered them His body to eat and His blood to drink; and they received the power of jurisdiction when, after His resurrection, He sent them forth with His own delegated authority, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained.' The instrument of conveyance is the Sacrament of Orders, the administration of which belongs to the bishop alone. The visible sign of the Sacrament is, after Apostolic precedent, the laying on of hands; the inward effect is twofold: firstly, the impressing on the soul a spiritual character or stamp which is indelible, so that he who is once a priest can never revert to the condition of a layman; and secondly, grace, not

sanctifying but official (*gratia gratis data*), for the valid performance of holy functions.[1] Such are the statements of the Council of Trent and its Catechism, and they contain a clear and consistent theory. Where there are no Sacraments and no forgiveness of sins there is no Church; but there is no Eucharistic offering of Christ as a sacrifice and no absolution where there is no legitimate priesthood; and there is no such priesthood where there are no true bishops, successors of the Apostles, to administer the Sacrament of Orders; and those only are true bishops who are in communion with the See of Rome; whence it follows that beyond the Roman obedience the appointed channels of grace are intercepted, and the uncovenanted mercies of God are all that remain.

Two theories of the origin of the Christian ministry may be entertained: we may suppose either that the sacred office is constituted from without and descends in a certain line, irrespectively of spiritual or moral qualifications; or that it primarily springs from within, and descends, it may be, in an ascertainable line of succession, but not without regard to *the fitness* of the possessor. The former mode belongs to the Jewish

[1] 'Cum episcopi et sacerdotes tanquam Dei interpretes et internuncii sint, qui ipsius Dei personam in terris gerunt.'—Cat. Conc. Trid., Part ii. c. vii. 'Intelligant fideles quanta ipsi ecclesiæ ejusque ministris potestas divinitus tributa sit. Ea autem duplex est, ordinis et jurisdictionis. Ordinis potestas ad verum Christi corpus in sacrosancta Eucharistia refertur. Jurisdictionis vero potestas tota in mystico Christi corpore versatur.'—Ibid. 'Si quis dixerit, illis verbis, Hoc facite in meam commemorationem, Christum non instituisse Apostolos sacerdotes, aut non ordinasse ut ipsi aliique sacerdotes offerrent corpus et sanguinem suum—anathema sit.'—Conc. Trid., Sess. xxii. Can. 2.

dispensation, the latter to the Christian. The Levitical priesthood was instituted *ab extra*; that is, a certain family was arbitrarily chosen to discharge the office, and it descended from father to son by natural birth, liable, no doubt, as in Eli's case, to forfeiture, but otherwise independent of personal qualifications. This was quite in harmony with a system typical in structure and intended to work from without inwards. Natural birth, the holy garments, anointing with oil, and typical sacrifices consecrated the priest of the old covenant. And this is substantially the theory of Rome. True to its fundamental principle of transmuting the Gospel into the Law, it here approximates closely to the legal institute.[1] There is the same notion of a purely external succession with inherited powers, for the absence of which no fulness of natural or spiritual endowment can compensate; only, instead of priests by natural, we have priests by spiritual descent, the existing bishops having the power, in and by the Sacrament of Orders, of spiritually generating ministers for the Church. The principle of *caste* is conspicuous in the system. The grace of the 'impressed character,' which may exist without either spiritual renovation or even moral virtue, is what transforms a lay member of the Church into a priest. In contrast with such a theory, the New Testament teaches that the Christian ministry is primarily a gift from above, and only secondarily an office; not

[1] 'Fateri oportet in eâ (ecclesia) novum esse et visibile et externum sacerdotium, in quod vetus translatum fuit.'—Conc. Trid., Sess. xxiii. c. 1.

inseparably connected with any official act, but proceeding, in the first instance, directly from the Holy Ghost.

On the general ground of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, with His ordinary sanctifying grace, is engrafted another fact: that He bestows special gifts in great variety for the offices necessary or salutary in each Church. Such is the scope of the well-known passage 1 Cor. xii., in which the Christian society at Corinth is compared to the human body; a whole pervaded by a common principle of life, but with many members, each discharging a distinct function, and all combining to the welfare of the body. So speaks the Apostle: 'There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. . . . To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; . . . to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues; but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.' And again: 'God hath set some in the Church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that miracles; then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.'[1] It will be seen that among the gifts mentioned are those connected with the ministry; such are apostles, prophets,

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 4–11, 28.

teachers, helps, and governments. So in another Epistle: 'He gave some, Apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.'[1] It has been sometimes overlooked that St. Paul in these passages is speaking not of different *orders* of the ministry but of different *gifts*; and the misinterpretation has given rise to erroneous theories. A difficulty has been felt in supposing that any office emanating from Christ Himself should so soon after the Apostolic age have fallen into abeyance, and some in modern times have been tempted to revive them, notably the Apostolate, in the Church, with what success is well known. The attempt was superfluous, for it is gifts, not orders, of which the Apostle speaks. The only apparent exception is the gift of 'Apostles,' for the Apostolate was an office as well as a gift; but there is no doubt that St. Paul was in the above passages considering it in its aspect of a special gift, either that of inspiration or of discerning of spirits.[2] Be this as it may, it is obvious that some of the gifts mentioned might be united in one person: thus an Apostle might, and indeed always was, an evangelist and teacher; the same person might be a prophet, a pastor, and a governor, and all might possess the gifts of healing and of miracles. The *offices* of the

[1] Ephes. iv. 11–12.

[2] Such a special gift was exercised in the cases of Ananias (Acts v.), Simon Magus (Acts viii.), and Elymas (Acts xiii.).

Apostolic ministry are only three — apostles, presbyters, and deacons.[1] Now, that the principle of formal transmission is not applicable to spiritual gifts of this kind may be inferred from their very nature and from the notices of the inspired record. They were bestowed on the day of Pentecost, and, as far as appears, on Cornelius and his friends, without any human instrumentality.[2] The gifts spoken of in 1 Cor. xii. appear to have manifested themselves here and there in the congregation as the Holy Spirit prompted; whether they were given directly, as on the day of Pentecost, or by the laying on of the hands of the Apostles, is not told us. We may, indeed, gather from Acts viii. and xix. that by the custom of the Church, while baptism was freely delegated to others, the Apostles either reserved to themselves the communication of spiritual gifts by the laying on of hands, or were invited, when absent, to visit the Churches for this purpose. Thus Peter and

[1] Both Hooker and Bilson give the true sense. 'I beseech them, therefore, which have hitherto troubled the Church about degrees and offices of ecclesiastical calling, because they principally ground themselves on two places (1 Cor. xii. 28; Ephes. iv. 11), that, all partiality being laid aside, they would sincerely weigh and examine whether they have not misinterpreted both places, and all by surmising incompatible offices when nothing is meant but sundry graces, gifts, and abilities which Christ bestowed.'—Eccles. Polity, Lib. v. c. 78. 'To make us understand that we must not confound the functions in the Church with the gifts of the Spirit; let us number up the gifts of the Spirit which are noted in this one chapter (1 Cor. xii.), and see whether the public functions of the Church can in any way be proportioned to them. Here are nine gifts numbered; I trust there were not so many distinct offices in the Church.'—Bilson, 'Perp. Gov.,' &c., c. x. p. 198.

[2] Acts x. 44.

John were sent from Jerusalem to lay hands on the Samaritan converts, who had been baptized but had not received this special sealing of the Holy Spirit. But no law on the subject is recorded. It was natural that they, in whom the Holy Ghost was supposed to dwell with a peculiar fulness, both in His ordinary and extraordinary gifts, should have been chosen by the Church to impart, by the well-known rite of imposition of hands *with prayer*, to the baptized upon whom the Holy Ghost had not yet fallen, these visible tokens of His presence. But neither were the gifts themselves restricted to those for the ministry; these special ones only occupy a place in a large catalogue of various others; nor were they bestowed upon particular persons or a particular class, but indiscriminately upon the whole body of believers. Prophecy, teaching, the interpretation of tongues, the discerning of spirits, appeared in those whom we should designate lay members of the Church.

There is no ground for the supposition of Bilson[1] and others that the Apostles imparted these ministerial gifts, and these alone, to certain persons to qualify them for official duties; though it is very likely that when they observed the presence of the gift in a person, they selected him for the office—that is, they recognised the gift, and followed out the intimation of the Holy Ghost. But the gift preceded the office. The Apostles could pray and lay hands on believers, in the confidence of faith that their prayers would be heard, and that the

[1] 'Perp Gov.,' c. vii.

Holy Ghost would manifest His presence by a variety of gifts; but what gifts would be given and what not, they could not antecedently pronounce. Moreovér, to communicate gifts is one thing, to enable others to communicate them is another; and we never read of the Apostles transmitting the office which they appear to have exercised themselves to any successors. Thus, while it may be difficult to explain why Philip, himself a possessor of the gift of miracles (Acts viii. 6), should not have prayed and laid hands on the Samaritan converts, no trace appears in the narrative of any mystical grace as a qualificatior for the ministry, or of its being the prerogative of the Apostles to transmit it. Even if they had this prerogative, it ceased with these its first possessors, for the simple reason that the extraordinary gifts themselves did not continue long in the Church. They were bestowed for a temporary purpose, and having served it, they gradually disappeared.

As regards the ministry, natural endowments take their place. This change began even in the Apostles' lifetime; as at an earlier period the gift comes to the front, while the office recedes into the background, now the reverse takes place. The transition is visible in St. Paul's later Epistles. In place of what we see in 1 Cor. xiv., when one member of the congregation had 'a psalm,' another 'a tongue,' a third 'a revelation,' a fourth 'an interpretation,' a fifth 'a doctrine,' of none of which does the Apostle discourage the exercise ('quench not the Spirit, despise not prophesyings'), only laying down the rule that all things be done

decently and in order; natural aptitude, moral qualifications, the habitual graces of 'power, and love, and of a sound mind,' are what St. Paul directs Timothy to look for in those on whom hands were to be laid; but these are also special gifts of God. A bishop must be 'apt to teach,' or have the *χάρισμα διδασκαλίας* always at command, so that the Church might not be dependent on the sudden impulses of the Spirit, now sensibly waning; he must also be one who has given proof, by well ruling his own house, of being qualified to govern the Church of God. The deacons, too, must be selected on account of their known integrity of character, and not without a previous probation.

At first the duties of the presbytery resembled those of the elders of the synagogue, whose proper business it was not to teach but to conduct the public affairs of the society; but in his first Epistle to Timothy, St. Paul connects the two functions more closely, and presbyters began to be regarded as also the ordinary teachers of the Church: 'Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.' All these are indications of an impending change in the manner of supplying the wants of the Church, of the approach of a state in which the spiritual gifts for the ministry should be exchanged for those natural endowments and moral qualifications which distinguish one Christian from another. But though circumstances may change, the principles of the new economy remain the same, and these on the point before us are, that the ministry

is not, in its essence, given from without, but is a gift of the Holy Ghost, inherent in the spiritual constitution of the Church; existing before it has settled into an outward form or forms of consistency; or, as it emanates directly from Christ, a special spiritual endowment, engrafted on the general idea of the Church as the temple of the Holy Ghost. Even the Apostolate was primarily a gift based on special discipleship, itself a proof—if any were needed[1]—that this office was but a temporary one, instituted for the purpose of founding the Church, but not a part of its permanent organisation. It would not have been suitable that an order of ministers, whose special function it was to lay the foundations of the Church, should spring from the bosom of the Church itself. Owing to its special function in this respect, the Apostolate alone of the ecclesiastical offices of the New Testament stood related to the Church as an external authority. As regards the others, the natural ministry exists before the formal, the gift before the commission by the Church to exercise it; it may be present in a lay possessor, even though it may never pass into the formal ministry; and, in short, the more we ascend from the circumstantials of the ministerial office to its essence, the more clearly does it appear that it is the Holy Ghost who, in the last resort, gives overseers to the Church,[2] and who refuses to be tied in His operations, and

[1] See Hort's Christian Ecclesia, pp. 22–32, 34–41.

[2] What else does our Church mean by the question addressed by the bishop to the candidate for deacon's orders: "Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministration?'

distributes to every man severally as He wills. That the natural endowments which St. Paul requires are even less susceptible of transmission than the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit is obvious.

The rite, which the Church of Rome has transformed into a Sacrament conveying the grace of ordination, has no title to that claim. Those whom the Apostles endowed, or found to be endowed, with gifts for the work of the ministry, they laid hands upon, but principally when some special mission was in contemplation. The rite itself was a familiar Jewish one, used on a variety of occasions, and the general signification of which was a communication of a blessing from a superior to an inferior. It was by no means appropriated to ordination. It was used in healing the sick, as when St. Paul laid hands on the father of Publius, and Ananias on Saul that he might receive his eyesight; by our Lord when He blessed little children; under the old Covenant, when Jacob blessed the children of Joseph, and Moses devolved part of his office on Joshua.[1] Even in the case of ministers it was not unfrequently more than once administered to the same individual. Thus when Saul and Barnabas, who had been long engaged in preaching the Gospel, had a new field of labour assigned them by the Spirit, the 'prophets and teachers' at Antioch laid their hands upon them with fasting and prayer, and sent them forth to their destination.[2] So Timothy appears to have had hands laid upon him

[1] Num. xxvii. 18.

[2] Acts xiii. 1-3.

on two several occasions, once by the presbyters, and a second time by St. Paul;[1] but, by the rule of the Church, ordination with its 'impressed character' cannot be repeated. On the whole, neither does a special rite for appointing ministers, nor special persons by whom alone the rite is to be administered,[2] appear in the inspired record; still less the notion that a priestly virtue, qualifying the possessor to change (in whatever sense) the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, or to absolve from sin, was lodged in the Apostles, to be by them transmitted to their so-called successors the bishops, and continued in a series to the end of this dispensation. And, be it repeated, this is what in Romanism and kindred

[1] 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6. The suggestion of some ancient writers that the word *πρεσβυτερίου* in the first of these passages may signify 'the office of an elder,' by which it is made to mean that Timothy was ordained to be a presbyter, has been abandoned by most recent commentators of note. The word is never used in the New Testament in that sense, nor was the office which Timothy held that of an elder, in the strict sense of the word. For what purpose St. Paul laid hands on him again, and what the gift mentioned was, we are not told.

[2] Chrysostom *in loc.* cuts the knot by maintaining that they who laid hands on Timothy were not presbyters but bishops: 'Οὐ *περὶ πρεσβυτέρων φησὶν ἐνταῦθα, ἀλλὰ περὶ ἐπισκόπων· οὐ γὰρ δὴ πρεσβύτεροι τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἐχειροτόνουν*: an instance of Scriptural interpretation not uncommon: because in *his* time, presbyters could not, by the rule of the Church, ordain, Chrysostom argues that so it must have been in the first age of the Church. The instance of the Alexandrian Church, in which, as Jerome reports, it was the custom for the presbyters to 'choose one of their own number, and placing him in a higher position, to salute him bishop,' is well known. Jerome is confirmed by the author of 'Quæstiones de utroque Testamento,' whose book, though probably spurious, is printed among Augustine's works: 'nam in Alexandriâ et per totam Egyptum, si desit episcopus, consecrat presbyter' (Q. 101). 'Hence it followeth that many things which in some cases presbyters may lawfully do are reserved unto bishops,

systems is meant by the Apostolical succession; apart from which, it possesses little importance and no dogmatical value.[1]

For, in truth, there is an Apostolical succession which is not only natural but scriptural. The Apostles may be regarded under a threefold aspect. On some occasions they represent the whole body of believers, as at the institution of the Lord's Supper. After the departure of Judas, through the word which Jesus spake,[2] the rest were a body of sincere though im-

as Hierome noteth: "potius ad honorem sacerdotii quam ad legis necessitatem." . . . Who knoweth not that all presbyters in cases of necessity absolve and reconcile penitents? And why not by the same reason ordain presbyters and deacons?' *—Field, 'Of the Church,' Bk. iii. c. 39; compare Hooker, Eccles. Polity, Lib. vii. c. 14.

[1] The use of the word 'ordination' and its derivatives to signify the act of setting apart persons for the ministry, has led to a forgetfulness of its real origin; of all ecclesiastical terms it is the most purely secular in derivation. The word *ordo*, from which the verb *ordinare* is derived, was the technical term for the senate or council to which, in the colonies and municipal towns of the Roman empire, the administration of local affairs was committed, and the members of which were called 'decuriones.' The correlative, therefore, to the ordo was the plebs or private citizens, as distinguished from the magistracy. The word 'ordinare' is never used by the classical writers to signify consecration to a sacred office. From the state it passed into the Church, whence the use in the early Latin fathers of the word plebs to denote the Christian people, the laity, in contrast with the clergy. It is reasonable to suppose that, when first introduced, its ecclesiastical corresponded to its civil meaning, and that to be ordained or invested with holy orders signified merely to be chosen a member of the governing body or presbytery in a Christian society.

[2] 'Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said: Master, is it I? He said unto him: Thou hast said' (Matt. xxvi. 21, 25).

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* For a similar view of the rite of ordination, and an interesting, though different account of the laying on of hands on St. Timothy, see Hort's Christian Ecclesia, pp. 178–188, 215–216.

perfect believers, fit representatives of the blessed company of all faithful people to the end of time. To them in this capacity Christ delivered the symbols of His body broken and His blood shed; and here their official character is merged in their Christian. Again, they were to be the special instruments of founding and building up the Church, the ultimate authority to which Christians are to defer in matters of faith and practice. Once more, they were to be the prototypes, in their offices of preaching and pastoral work, of the ordinary Christian ministry. Under the first head, the only successors they have is the Holy Catholic Church collectively; under the second, they have no successors at all except in their writings, in which, though dead, they yet speak; under the third, they have living successors, for the Christian ministry will subsist until Christ comes again. But more than this; there is an external succession in this sense, that the commission to exercise the gifts for the ministry is, according to Scripture example, the province of the existing body of ministers.

Although the consent of the whole body was required to the appointment of ministers, we do not find in Scripture that the delegated authority to preach or to rule proceeded from it. The Apostles themselves received their commission from Christ, and from no other authority. When it became necessary to appoint deacons, the Church was directed to select suitable persons, but the Apostles formally

set them apart by the imposition of hands. When a further addition was made to ministerial orders, the Apostles are said to have 'appointed for them elders in every Church' (R. V., Acts xiv. 23); not, we may be sure, without the consent of each Church, but still reserving to themselves the formal act of investment. In the Apostolic Epistles to Churches we find no allusion to what—had it belonged to the whole body—would have been one of their most important duties—the formal appointment or removal of their pastors. In the Pastoral Epistles it is existing ministers — Timothy and Titus, Apostolic delegates — to whom directions on this point are given. But if so, the Apostles were the first link in the chain, and there is no reason why a succession, as regards the external commission, should not proceed from age to age, the existing body of ministers handing down the official authority to their successors, and these latter in turn to theirs. It is obvious that an important counterpoise would thus be raised to popular influence, sure to make itself unduly felt wherever the minister is appointed solely by the congregation: it is one of the many defects of the Baptist or Congregationalist regimen that in this particular it is not in harmony with full Scripture precedent. The erroneous notion that a single congregation under its pastor, and that only, is a Church in the Scriptural sense of the word, not only reduces the Christian body in any

locality to a collection of atoms, lacking in the higher forms of unity, but excludes the idea of a ministerial devolution of office. On the removal of a pastor, the congregation proceeds to choose a successor; but there is no recognised body of ministers to transmit the commission. An attempt is sometimes made to remedy the defect by inviting neighbouring pastors to assist at the installation of the new minister; but this is regarded only as an act of brotherly recognition. The qualifications of the candidate are not formally authenticated by any official college, and his call proceeds from the congregation only. Such a system is exposed to dangers of a different kind indeed, but nevertheless quite as grave as those which beset a purely hierarchical government.[1] There is then a natural and salutary succession, but nothing like what Romanism understands by the term. It is simply a recognition of ministerial gifts divinely vouchsafed, and authority to make them available to the edifying of the Church;

[1] The Protestant confessions and chief theologians insist on the principle explained in the text: 'Qui electi sunt ordinentur a senioribus cum orationibus publicis, et impositione manuum.'—Expos. Simp., c. 18. 'Nec quisquam nisi ecclesiæ et imprimis ejus antistitum assensu subsequente, per ecclesiæ electionem ad ministerium vocatus, et per ordinationem, seu manuum impositionem, a presbyterio confirmatus, ministerium in ecclesiâ exercere jure potest.'—Decl. Thorun. de Ord. 'Presbyterio competit examen, ordinatio, et inauguratio.'—J. Gerb., Loc. xxiii. 87. 'Præesse electioni (ministrorum) debent alii pastores, ne quid vel per levitatem, vel per mala studia, vel per tumultum, a multitudine peccetur.'—Calv. Instit., Lib. iv. c. 3, s. 15.

or, as Hooker rightly remarks, 'Out of men thus endued with the gifts of the Spirit upon their conversion to the Christian faith, the Church had her ministers chosen, unto whom was given ecclesiastical power by ordination;' the ecclesiastical power, not a specific grace, being the effect of the imposition of hands.[1]

To the Apostles a special gift, that of discerning spirits, was imparted to aid them in selection; since the disappearance of such gifts, we supply their place, as best we can, by examination of candidates and prayer for guidance; but since infallibility in the exercise of such functions is not guaranteed, mistakes will from time to time occur, and some whom the Holy Ghost has not moved thereto will gain admission to the sacred office, and others who have the gift will receive no authority to use it in public. Meanwhile, the general rule holds good: 'It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching or ministering the Sacraments in the congregation before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard.'[2]

2. The discussion hitherto has been concerned with the abstract questions of the mode in which the ministerial office comes into existence, the sense in

[1] Eccles. Polity, Bk. v. c. 78.

[2] Art. xxiii.

which it is of Divine institution, and how far an Apostolical succession may be admitted; we have now to inquire into the nature of the office itself, or the relation in which the persons formally invested with it stand towards the other members of the Church. Romanism assigns to Christian ministers a twofold character which the Protestant cannot, except in a modified sense, recognise as belonging to them: According to the Council of Trent, the government of the Church is a hierarchy, or the relation of the clerical body to the Christian people is that of a secular magistracy to its subjects; and Christian ministers are mediators between God and man, that is, are priests in the proper sense of the word.

(1.) The government of the Church is affirmed to be a hierarchy, that is, as the term imports, government by a priesthood, which exercises powers over the Christian people similar to that of the State over its subjects.[1] A gradation of orders in the ministerial office, and, under proper checks, an independent ministerial authority, are sanctioned in Scripture and have been proved by experience conducive to the well-being of the Church. Indeed, wherever the Scriptural model of a Church governed, not by a single pastor but by a college of presbyters, is re-

[1] 'Dominus noster Jesus Christus e terris ascensurus ad cœlos sacerdotes sui ipsius vicarios reliquit, tanquam præsides et judices.'—Conc. Trid., Sess. xiv. c. 5. 'God requires of us a renunciation of self-will, and He has therefore constituted an order which shall bear rule over His people and shall bring them under a yoke of obedience to Himself.'—Manning, 'Unity,' &c., P. ii. c. 3, p. 239.

tained, wherever there is an organisation of the clerical body, there must exist the relation of superior to inferior. If Timothy and Titus were not formal bishops, they were yet placed, for the time, not only over the Church at large, but over presbyters also. But the hierarchical principle of Romanism is something very different from this. Not content with assigning to Christian ministers their due share of power and influence, Romanism virtually merges the Church in the ministry and makes the former a mere adjunct of the latter; the ministry sustains the Church, not the Church the ministry. The laity, in fact, are in a state of pupilage, under a paternal but despotic government, which has received a commission to decide authoritatively in matters of faith and morals, to enact laws, and to inflict ecclesiastical censures, unfettered by any will but its own. Now a commission to make laws without the means of enforcing obedience to them would be a mockery, and, in fact, ample means have been provided for subduing the resistance which refractory human nature might offer to the mandates of the governing body. The power of the keys, by which is understood not the remitting and retaining of sins by the ministry of the Word, but sacerdotal absolution, is sufficient for the purpose. The priest has but to retain sin by refusing absolution, and no pardon can be hoped for, while excommunication is complete severance from Christ. Not without reason is the *potestas jurisdictionis*, or power of government, assigned by

Romish writers to the clergy and exercised in the sacrament of penance; for, in truth, this one 'nerve of discipline,' as the Council calls it, can, in all ordinary cases, crush any symptoms of an insubordinate spirit.

It was not without dissatisfaction in some quarters that the Tridentine decrees were framed. That Christian instinct, which has never wholly disappeared from the Romish Church even in its worst times, and which was now quickened by contact with Protestantism, recoiled from the despotic power claimed for the Pope over bishops, for bishops over the other clergy, and for the whole priesthood over the laity. The very name, it was remarked, of a hierarchy carried with it an unchristian sound; the New Testament describes the clergy as the ministers or servants of the Christian people, not as their governors.[1] But these protests were unavailing. Gallican Romanism, indeed, made a successful stand against the concentration of power in the Pope; but to admit the laity to an effective share in the government of the Church would have been as distasteful to a Bossuet as to a Bellarmine. The latter sums up the doctrine of his Church as follow: 'It has always been believed in the Catholic Church that the bishops in their dioceses, and the Roman Pontiff in the whole Church, are real ecclesi-

[1] 'L'on ajoutait même que si l'on eût voulu se conformer au style et à la conduite de Jésus Christ, de ses Apôtres, ou de l'ancienne église on n'eût pas se servir du terme de Hiérarchie, mais de ceux de Hiérodiaconie, ou de Hiérodulie, qui indiquent un ministère et non un empire.'—Sarpi, vol. ii. Bk. viii. p. 257 (Courayer).

astical princes, competent, by their own authority and without the consent of the people or the advice of the presbyters, to enact laws binding on the conscience, to judge in causes ecclesiastical like other (secular) judges, and, if need be, to inflict punishment.'[1] Still, we are told, as a mitigating circumstance or concession to human weakness, that Romanism is not without a popular element, viz., that 'there is no one of the Christian community but may become a bishop, and thus a member of the governing body!'

The restoration, in theory at least, of the laity to their rights was an immediate result of the Reformation. By reasserting the universal priesthood of Christians and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit not in a priestly caste but in the whole body, Luther and his contemporaries shook the edifice of sacerdotal usurpation to its base. Justification by faith put an end to the confessional with its power of remitting and retaining sins. The Church ceased to be a synonyme for the clergy, and an inquiring age examined and disallowed the claim of the latter to special spiritual illumination. The change was life from the dead. A reaction so great might be expected to give rise to excesses on the other side, and in some instances the recovered liberty of the Church ran wild into license. In others, the legitimate and effective action of the laity, though acknowledged in Articles and Confessions, was never actually restored; the secular government, as the representative of the

[1] De Rom. Pont., Lib. iv. c. 15.

nation, taking to itself the powers which had been previously assumed by the Pope and his delegates. The true adjustment of lay and clerical influence is a problem which yet remains to be sólved in most of the Reformed Churches. As regards the pretensions of Rome, they may be at once dismissed. The distinction *in kind* between clergy and laity does not appear in the New Testament. In St. Peter's view the whole Church, and not a part of it, is the Lord's clerisy or peculiar people.[1] Yet the ministers of Christ are 'leaders' and 'overseers,' to whom due respect belongs. In other words, the sovereignty of a Church resides not in the clergy alone or in the laity alone, but in the whole body.

Three rules, by the observance of which the due balance may be preserved, are commended to us by Apostolic precedent. The first is the free admission of the laity to the deliberative assemblies of the Church. It is contrary both to the spirit and the letter of Scripture that ecclesiastical synods should be composed of the clergy alone. The precedent of the Apostolic conference held at Jerusalem (Acts xv.) is decisive. The Apostles and elders are said to have come together to consider the matter in debate; but that the whole Church took part in the proceedings appears from ver. 12: 'Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul;' and from ver. 22: 'It pleased the Apostles and elders, with the whole Church, to send chosen men to Antioch;'

[1] Μηδ' ὡς κατακυριεύοντες τῶν κλήρων (1 Peter v. 3).

so that the decree ran in the name of the whole Church.[1] The steps by which this Apostolic model was departed from may be easily traced. The synodal system, in itself beneficial, was the proximate cause. When dioceses expanded into provinces, it was natural that there should be provincial as well as diocesan synods. The latter for a long time retained a popular element. Even Cyprian declares it to have been his rule, from the time when he became bishop, to do nothing without the advice of his presbyters and the consent of his people.[2] But in the provincial synods, to which the more important questions were referred, it soon became the custom of the bishops only, as representatives of their respective Churches, to be summoned, the presbyters appearing merely as attendants on their bishop, while the laity were virtually excluded or present as spectators without a vote. At length, in the greater Councils, the whole administrative power passed into the hands of the bishops, neither the other clergy or the laity having any voice in the decisions.[3] These were binding on the whole pro-

[1] The R. V. omits the second 'and' in ver. 23, which would then read thus: 'The Apostles and elders brethren.' Such an expression as this latter is seldom if ever found in the New Testament; and, moreover, the A. V. has good MS. authority in its favour. Be this as it may, vers. 12, 22, decide the point.

[2] Epist. v. ad Presb. et Diacon.

[3] 'Catholicorum sententia est, solos prælatos majores eosque omnes, id est, episcopos, in conciliis generalibus et provincialibus habere jus suffragii decisivi ordinarie; ex presbyteris autem et aliis clericis minoribus tantum vocari aliquos viros doctos qui juvent in disputando vel aliis ministeriis; denique ex privatis laicis tantum vocari aliquos qui videantur utiles, vel necessarii ad aliquod ministerium concilii.'—Bellarm. de Conc., Lib. i. c. 15.

vince, and each bishop returned to his diocese to enforce decrees in the framing of which his order alone had a share. It is replied, indeed, that the bishop being one with his flock and his flock with him, the laity were, in fact, present at synods through their bishop;[1] but refined considerations of this kind are not found, in practice, to be of much avail. A clerical corporation, like every other, tends to its own aggrandisement, and this without sinister motives. It would be unjust to attribute to the bishops of the early centuries a deliberate design to augment their own prerogatives at the expense of the Church; such, nevertheless, was the result of their measures. The circumstances of the times may plead their excuse. The picture which Cyprian's epistles present of that singular class of persons the 'Confessors,' their arrogance and contempt of lawful authority, might well suggest to a pious bishop that in exalting his order he was promoting the interests of religion. This tightening of the reins of authority, however, did not disappear with the temporary necessity for it; assumptions which were forced upon a Cyprian became the ordinary style of his successors; every contest between the presbyters or the laity and the bishops terminated in favour of the latter; and thus by continual accretions the hierarchical system of the Middle Ages attained its full growth.

No Church can be in a healthy condition which excludes from the administration of its affairs any part

[1] Möhler, 'Einheit,' &c., p. 211.

of the body ecclesiastic. They who are made to feel that they are merely an appendage to the priesthood cease to feel an interest in the community to which they belong, and a spirit of indifference as injurious as hostility takes the place of sympathy and hearty co-operation. There can be no genuine Church feeling where there is no Church life, and there can be no Church life where the relation of clergy to people resembles that of governors and subjects. 'Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them, but it shall not be so among you' (Matt. xx. 25–27).

The second point in which the laity have joint rights with the clergy is in the appointment of pastors; not in the duty of authenticating the gift and giving the external commission, but in the local settlement of the pastor. The Scriptural rule is that no pastor is to be placed over a Church without its consent having been previously obtained. The first occasion on which, after the Ascension, appointment to an ecclesiastical office was made was that on which a successor to Judas Iscariot was to be chosen. If in any instance it might have seemed proper to dispense with the concurrence of the people, this was one; that Apostles alone should fill up the vacancy in the Apostolate was perhaps to be expected. Yet the matter was referred by Peter to the whole company of the disciples, and they (the 120) gave in their lots, and the choice fell on Matthias. So in the appointment of deacons, the

'multitude of the disciples' were directed to select from themselves those whom they should judge best qualified for the office; they did so, the Apostles reserving to themselves the formal investiture. Passing on in the history, Paul and Barnabas ordained elders by taking the suffrages of the people. It is true that the word here used (*χειροτονήσαντες*) often signifies the simple act of appointing; but it is better, where there is no reason, as there is none here, for departing from it, to retain its natural signification, viz., to appoint by a show of hands. The rule in question is confirmed by the testimony of Clement of Rome. 'Those,' he writes, 'whom either the Apostles or other distinguished men placed in the ministry, with the consent of the whole Church' (that is, each particular Church), 'it is not right to depose from their office.' And it continued for several centuries after the Christian era. 'On which account,' writes Cyprian, 'the people (plebs), obedient to our Lord's command, and fearing God, ought to separate themselves from a bishop who commits sin, and not assist at the sacrifices of an impious priest, since they possess the power either of choosing worthy priests or refusing unworthy.'[1]

The third and perhaps the most important of the rights which belong to the laity relates to the administration of discipline. That the power of inflicting Church censures is to be vested not in the clerical body alone but in the whole Church appears from the final court of appeal which our Lord, speaking by

[1] Epist. 68.

anticipation, establishes in cases of disagreement among Christians, 'Tell it to the Church,' that is, the whole body. The case of the incestuous Corinthian is to the point. St. Paul, after reproving the Corinthians for their laxity of discipline, tells them that by virtue of the Apostolical authority which extended over the whole Church he had resolved to deliver the offender to Satan, apparently superseding, for the time being, the regular authorities. But it was not really so. He regards what he was about to do as the joint act of himself and the society. It was when the Church was gathered together, he being present in spirit, that the sentence of excommunication (if such is the meaning) was to be passed. In the Second Epistle, too, he speaks of the transaction as 'the punishment inflicted of many.'[1] Now, of all ecclesiastical acts, the expulsion of a member is the most sovereign; indeed, it is the only sovereign act which a Church, as such, can perform, and corresponds to the banishment and deprivation of civil rights of one of its members by the State.

Wherever the clergy possess an uncontrolled power of inflicting Church censures, a spiritual despotism of an oppressive kind is the natural consequence. The two dogmas, that the sovereignty of the Church resides in the priesthood, and that the priest is the representative of Christ, empowered to remit or retain sins, were sufficient to enslave the mind of Europe, spiritually and intellectually, for a thousand years. Nor were they to regain a footing amongst us would

[1] 2 Cor. ii. 6.

they be found to have lost aught of their obnoxious tendency. Under such a system the governors of the Church, invested with authority from which there is no appeal, save perhaps to a tribunal exclusively of their own order, and without the salutary check of lay influence, may enact what laws, and add to those laws what sanctions they please; while for the laity, nothing remains but abject submission.

(2.) If the relation of clergy to laity is not that of governors to subjects, still less is the Christian ministry a proper priesthood. To discuss this subject in all its bearings would be inconsistent with the limits of a work like the present; besides which its position in the Romish system can only be fully understood in connection with its correlative, the proper sacrifice of the Eucharist. Little more will be attempted than to examine whether Scripture warrants the statement that, under the Gospel dispensation, there exists a human priesthood.

It is not easy to determine to which we are to assign priority, the transformation of the Eucharist into a sacrifice or that of the Christian ministry into a priesthood. The Council of Trent adopts the former hypothesis, arguing that since Christ appointed the propitiatory sacrifice of the Eucharist, there must be a priest to administer it;[1] but it seems more probable that the notion of a Christian priesthood was historically antecedent to, and the parent of, the corresponding doctrine touching the Eucharist. The cessation of

[1] Sess. xxiii. c. 1.

the temple services, A.D. 70, appears to have led to a transfer of the Jewish sacerdotal orders, with the necessary modifications, to the 'new law,' and since a priesthood must have a sacrifice to offer, the Eucharist assumed that character. To whichever dogma we assign priority, there is no element of Romanism of more ancient date. Already by Ignatius the Lord's table is called an altar, and even Clement of Rome compares Christian ministers to the high priest, priests, and Levites. If Vincentius' rule—'Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus'—is to be so understood that *Scripture, the first link in the chain of tradition being excluded*, whatever has been held generally by the early fathers, is to be received as part of the Apostolic deposit of doctrine, the dogma alluded to possesses claims which it is difficult to reject.

The decisions of the Council of Trent on this subject are as follows: 'Sacrifice and priesthood are by the appointment of God so closely connected that in every dispensation both have been found to exist. Since, therefore, the new covenant possesses a visible Sacrifice, ordained by Christ Himself, viz., that of the Eucharist, it was necessary that there should be also established a visible and external priesthood, succeeding to that of the old dispensation. The Christian priesthood was instituted by our Lord in the persons of His Apostles, upon whom He conferred the power of remitting and retaining sins; from the Apostles this power descended to their successors. In the Sacrament of Orders, which is the rite of consecra-

tion to the priest's office, a new spiritual position or standing is conferred, which is necessary to the validity of sacerdotal acts. At the same time, and by the same ordinance, an ineffaceable impression or character is stamped upon the inner man, so that it is as impossible for a Christian priest to revert to the condition of a layman as it would have been for a Jewish priest to undo the fact of his natural birth. This impressed character is that which constitutes, amidst the varying phases of the Christian Church, the identity of the priestly line, just as the true personality of the Levitical priesthood, under every form of the Jewish Commonwealth, lay in its descent from Aaron.'[1] It is easy to see why the 'impressed character' was attached to the Sacrament of Orders as well as to baptism and confirmation. It is supposed to convey neither sanctifying grace nor spiritual gift but a Christian standing, whereby they who receive it are distinguished from their brethren in Christ or from unbelievers. Thus in Baptism it signifies that the baptized person is translated from the kingdom of Satan to that of Christ; in Confirmation he is enlisted under the banner of Christ, 'the character' resembling the stamp which a shepherd impresses on his sheep, so that by means of it the Church is enabled to recognise, and claim as deserters, those who renounce her authority; and in Orders he becomes a member of the priestly caste, who as mediators between God and man, enjoy a special

[1] Sess. xxiii. c. 1, 4.

nearness to God. Under the Mosaic law this specific prerogative was attached to natural birth; under the new law, natural birth gives place to a psychological 'character' or inward quality, without which the Sacraments have no validity.

The speedy departure on this capital point from Apostolic teaching is one of the most remarkable facts in ecclesiastical history; yet the source whence it sprang lies déep in human nature. The idea of a mediator between man and his Creator is founded on a consciousness on the part of the former, never quite extinct, that direct access to the Divine Being is no longer his privilege. Hence almost every form of Paganism had its priests or intermediaries between the deity worshipped and his worshippers. To these persons, invested with an official sanctity, it was felt to be a relief to delegate those acts of religious homage, the duty of which was acknowledged, but a sense of demerit discouraged; priesthood is a religion by proxy.

Under the old covenant, what natural religion had prompted received a Divine sanction, and a sinful though favoured nation had its human priesthood through which alone acceptable sacrifices could be offered. No other than such a priesthood could be appointed, because that which it prefigured existed only in the Divine counsel and promise; the Son had not become incarnate, the full and sufficient sacrifice for sin had not been offered, redemption was, so far, incomplete. There was as yet no Heavenly Priest in our nature who could appear in our behalf before the

throne of God. This is the answer to those who ask: 'If a human priesthood under the Gospel is needless because the work of mediation is discharged by Christ alone, why should not the Jewish priesthood have been useless also? If it interferes with the sole merits of Christ by providing another way of approaching God, why then did not the Jewish priesthood the same?'[1] The Jewish priesthood could not interfere with the work and office of Christ, because there was no Incarnate Son to interfere with. It was a provision for the time being, until He in whom all these shadows were fulfilled and abolished had finished the work of redemption and passed into the heavens.

Such is the testimony of Scripture, especially of that inspired commentary on the Levitical law, the Epistle to the Hebrews. If Christ be a priest at all, the author argues, He must be our only one; the antitype being come, the type disappears; and moreover, He could not be a priest on earth, because He was not of the tribe of Levi, nor called after the order of Aaron, and in this case the Gospel which He came to introduce would have no priest, no advocate with the Father,—an argument which equally proves that the Apostles, the first link in the chain of the ministry, were not priests, several of them, to say the least, not being of the tribe of Levi. But the Gospel *has* a Priest, but that Priest is Christ, 'called after the order of Melchisedec,' 'not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an

[1] Wilberforce, 'Incarnation,' p. 386.

endless life.' By this change of the priesthood, there was made of necessity a change in the law; a new order of things was introduced. As every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices, it is of necessity that this Man should have somewhat to offer, and the offering which He presented was His body once for all, by one offering perfecting them that are sanctified. The perfection of this sacrifice forbids its being ever repeated. If the Levitical sacrifices were offered year by year, it was because they could not make the comers thereunto perfect; could they have done so, would they not have ceased to be offered?

The sacrifice is never to be repeated, but the virtue and efficacy of it are continually presented before the heavenly mercy-seat; as the earthly high priest presented the blood of victims every year, so Christ is entered, not into the holy places made with hands, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entered into the holy place with blood of others; for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; now, where remission of sins is, there is no more offering for sin, and therefore no longer occasion for an earthly priesthood.[1] Such, almost in the words of the writer, is the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews; and it may be remarked in passing, that the Protestant, in rejecting

[1] Heb. c. x.

the dogma of an earthly priesthood, by no means makes the Old Testament a dead letter to Christians, but, on the contrary, by referring its types to their proper object, infuses meaning into the otherwise 'carnal ordinances' of the law. Christ Himself, not a new priestly caste, is the key to the Levitical ritual, which thus acquires a dignity which does not otherwise belong to it. In itself, the ceremonial law was a system of 'beggarly elements,' unfit for the more advanced stages of religion; but when viewed as prefigurative of the Redeemer's offices, the symbolical ordinances of the law are rescued from their inherent insignificance; they shine with a reflected light, and the luminary that sheds lustre on them is the Sun of Righteousness Himself, the fulfilment of type and prophecy, and the sole Priest of His Church.

Confirmatory of their doctrinal statements is the studied abstinence of the Apostles, when speaking of the Christian ministry, from the use of terms belonging to the Jewish law; ministers are pastors, teachers, rulers, evangelists, but never once is the term Hiereus (*sacerdos*)—that is, a sacrificing priest—applied to them, or the Eucharist spoken of as a sacrifice. We have no occasion to qualify this statement, because in Heb. xiii. 10 Christians are said to 'have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.' The words are of uncertain meaning, but it can hardly be supposed that the writer intended to reverse the conclusion, which at great length he had laboured to establish, that under the Gospel there is

no offering for sin but that of the Cross—but where there is no offering for sin, there is no literal altar; the Cross of Calvary is the Christian's altar, and by faith he feeds on the atonement there wrought, a heavenly feast, from which the priests of the law were excluded by their own code[1]—nor to qualify it, because St. Paul declares that he was the minister of Christ to the Gentiles, that 'the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable to God.'[2] Unquestionably that the Gentiles should not offer sacrifices, but themselves be offered up to the service of God, was the object of the Apostle's labours; but as the sacrifice was 'a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice,'[3] so the Apostle's ministration, his λειτουργία or priestly function, was nothing but the preaching of the Gospel.[4] The Apostles do indeed transfer the terms of the Jewish law to the Gospel, but with the necessary modification of meaning. Instead of describing himself and his colleagues as priests, St. Peter declares all Christians to be 'a royal priesthood;' not in the figurative sense in which the Jewish nation was so described,[5] but in

[1] The parallel is, as throughout the Epistle, between the ceremony of the day of atonement and the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. On ordinary occasions the bodies of the victims were assigned to the priests for their sustenance, but on the day of atonement they were burnt without the camp (Lev. xvi. 27). The Judaising converts, therefore, did on their own principles exclude themselves from the spiritual banquet of the Christian sacrifice. That the word 'altar' is not to be taken literally is plain from the sacrifices to be offered on it, those of praise and thanksgiving (vers. 15, 16).

[2] Rom. xv. 16. [3] Rom. xii. 1.

[4] ἱερουργοῦντα τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ Θεοῦ (Rom. xv. 16).

[5] Exod. xix. 6: 'Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests.' This passage has been, even recently, cited as warranting a human priest-

the proper sense of the word, because the way into the holiest being now thrown open, Christians have immediate access to God through Christ without the intervention of human mediators. And as every priest must have somewhat to offer, Christians have their sacrifices, but only spiritual ones, the 'fruit of the lips, giving thanks to His name,'[1] or of themselves on the altar of self-devotion. That it is these sacrifices, and not material offerings, that are meant in such passages as Mal. i. 11—'In every place incense shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering'—Melancthon and Chemnitz have long ago satisfactorily shown.[2]

hood under the Gospel. If the Jews were intended to be a kingdom of priests, and yet had a separate caste to mediate between them and Jehovah, why should there not be the same provision under the Gospel? Priesthood, we answer, involves two things, separable in thought though not in fact—direct access to God, and a mediating function. The Jewish people were chosen out of all others to enjoy a nearness of relation to Jehovah, and so far were priests but what mediating function had it? Was it intended to mediate between other nations and God? It might be called a priesthood in the former sense, but it never could have been so in the latter. Christians draw nigh to God through Christ, but in the very act of doing so they make use of the Divine Mediator in our nature, for Christ is God.

[1] Heb. xiii. 15.

[2] 'Ipsa prophetæ verba offerunt sententiam. Primum enim, hoc proponunt, magnum fore nomen Domini. Id fit per prædicationem evangelii. Per hanc enim innotescit nomen Christi, et misericordia Christi, et misericordia Patris in Christo promissa cognoscitur. Prædicatio evangelii parit fidem in his qui recipiunt evangelium. Hi invocant Deum, hi agunt gratias, hi tolerant afflictiones in confessione, hi bene operantur propter gloriam Christi. Ita fit magnum nomen Dei in gentibus. Incensum igitur et oblatio munda significant non ceremoniam ex opere operato, sed omnia alia sacrificia per quæ fit magnum nomen Dei, scil. fidem, invocationem, prædicationem evangelii, confessionem,' &c.—Melancth., 'Apol. Conf. Augs.' (quid sit sacrificium), c. xii. s. 32; compare Chemnitz, Exam. Conc. Trid., Part ii. Loc. vi. Arg. 6, s. 8.

There are extant three Epistles of St. Paul addressed to Christian ministers in which the duties of their office is described at length, but among them we search in vain for any of a sacerdotal character. Timothy is directed to preach the Word, to give attendance to reading, exhortation, and doctrine, to ordain elders, to exercise discipline; but nowhere is he instructed how to offer up the body and blood of Christ, or to absolve Christians from their sins; no form of consecration or prescribed ritual appears among the Apostle's instructions. Now omissions of this kind in Epistles dealing especially with the ministerial office are, on the supposition that Christ appointed a proper priesthood in His Church, unaccountable. For wherever there is a visible sacrifice and priesthood, they stand out in decided superiority to every other constituent of worship. So it was under the Levitical law, and so it is in the Church of Rome; the Mass is the prime act of worship, compared with which every other is of subordinate moment. If St. Paul had regarded Timothy or Titus as priests, no doubt details on their sacerdotal duties would have occupied as large a space in these Epistles as they do in the Levitical code or in *Directorium Anglicanum*. If it be alleged, in explanation of the silence of the New Testament on these points, that, inasmuch as Christianity is confessedly the spiritual offspring of Judaism, there was no need for the Apostles to allude to the subject, since converts would take for granted that, unless formally abrogated, the Jewish sacerdotal

system was to continue under the Gospel; the answer is, that the form of organisation which, under Divine superintendence, Christian societies assumed, viz., that of the synagogue, having no sacerdotal associations connected with it, an express revelation from heaven to the Apostles, and through them to their converts, that, notwithstanding this difficulty, visible sacrifices and priesthood were to continue in the Christian Church, would have been necessary to counteract the impression. The Apostle Paul would have omitted an important duty had he not explained the matter to his correspondents. No such embarrassment arose, because Apostolic Christianity had no other sacrifice or priesthood than the sacrifice and priesthood of Christ. The writer above mentioned asks again, 'If it' (the Jewish ritual) 'interfered with the work of Christ, how could the Apostles have continued to observe it? Would it not have been enough to leave it to die away under the light of the Gospel? It would not have been sufficient for St. Paul to teach men not to trust in it; he must have forbidden any to practise it;'[1] whence the inference is drawn that a corresponding ritual now would not interfere with the work of Christ. As long as no sign from heaven was given that the temple services were abolished, St. Paul did, as a matter of expediency, comply with the legal ordinances;[2] yet even then, when, as in the case of the Galatians, the observance was made essential to salvation, and so interfered with the work of

[1] Wilberforce, 'Incarnation,' p. 383.

[2] See p. 116.

Christ, the Apostle did on that ground peremptorily forbid it.[1] Not long afterwards the old dispensation came to an end, and the event determined all such questions for ever.

Exegetically, the Romish proofs from Scripture are hardly deserving of notice. The Apostles were certainly not priests by natural birth; when, then, did they become so? The change, we are told, took place at the Last Supper when Christ said 'Do this' (*hoc facite*) 'in remembrance of Me.' The expression 'in remembrance' is hardly applicable to one supposed to be present, and what can 'do this' mean but celebrate this ordinance (whenever you do celebrate it) 'in remembrance of Me'? But Christ, in instituting the Eucharist, committed the celebration of it, not to the whole body of believers, but to the select company of the Apostles. True, but on this occasion the Apostles represented the whole body. The same restriction might with even greater plausibility be applied to the baptismal commission (Matt. xxviii. 19), and yet it is not so applied. Christian ministers are described as stewards of the mysteries of God, and what can mysteries mean but sacraments? What the word means with St. Paul has been already explained. Finally, the power of absolution was conferred when Jesus appeared to the eleven ('whosesoever sins ye remit,' &c.); but, whatever be the meaning of the words, they

[1] 'Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing' (Gal. v. 2). And yet he himself circumcised Timothy (Acts xvi. 3).

were addressed not to the Apostles alone, but to the whole company of believers. Theologians must be hard pressed when they have recourse to such interpretations of Scripture.[1]

Protestantism rejects the dogma of a human priesthood on the same ground on which Apostolic Christianity does. When our Article declares that 'we are justified by faith only,' it excludes not only works from the office of justification, but the intervention of human mediators also. Faith, a lively faith, connects us directly with the priestly office of Christ, both in its propitiatory and its intercessory aspect; through Him, the 'new and living way,' we draw near to God and enter the most holy place. The doctrine of an earthly priesthood becomes a useless excrescence and falls away of itself; for what need can he feel of an earthly mediator who already possesses

[1] It was only gradually that the dogma of the validity of the Sacraments being dependent on the spiritual standing of the celebrant came to prevail in the Church. The free evangelical view continued for a long time to be held and taught by writers of note. How strongly is it expressed in the following passage of Tertullian:—'Dandi quidem habet jus summus sacerdos, qui est episcopus, dehinc presbyteri et diaconi, non tamen sine episcopi auctoritate, propter ecclesiæ honorem, quo salvo pax est. Alioquin etiam laicis jus est; quod enim ex æquo accipitur, ex æquo dari potest; nisi episcopi jam, aut presbyteri, aut diaconi, vocantur discentes. Domini sermo non debet abscondi ab ullo. Proinde et baptismus, æque Dei census, ab omnibus exerceri potest.'—'De Bapt.,' c. 17. It is true he is speaking only of baptism, but his reasoning applies to all the means of grace. Very different is the language of the Apostolical Constitutions: Ὡς οὖν οὐκ ἦν ἐξὸν ἀλλογενῆ, μὴ ὄντα Λευίτην, προσενέγκαι τι εἰς τὸ θυσιαστήριον ἄνευ τοῦ ἱερέως, οὕτω καὶ ὑμεῖς ἄνευ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου, μηδὲν ποιεῖτε . . . ὡς γὰρ ὁ Σαοὺλ, ἄνευ τοῦ Σαμουὴλ προσενέγκας, ἤκουσεν, ὅτι μεματαίωταί σοι· οὕτω καὶ πᾶς λαϊκὸς ἄνευ τοῦ ἱερέως ἐπιτελῶν τι, μάταια πονεῖ.—Lib. ii. c. 27.

a Divine one? The opponents of this Article, *stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ*, are probably too well acquainted with the Protestant symbols not to know that Solifidianism, as far as the term expresses an indifference to good works, is repudiated by them no less than by others; the distaste proceeds from a different source. The doctrine interferes with the sacerdotal powers of the clergy, and *hinc illæ lacrymæ*. Let us beware, then, of such statements as that the Church is the representative of Christ upon earth, or, as it is sometimes expressed, the incarnation of Christ, and therefore exercises sacerdotal functions. How can the Church, if the whole body is, as it ought to be, meant, mediate between itself and God? A representative must be so to a third party, not to itself. The anomaly is evident, and, in fact, the theory never remains in this incipient stage; the Church comes to signify the clergy, and it is they that are the incarnation of Christ. In a work acknowledged in its day to represent the mind of the Church of England we read on this subject: 'We say that Christ hath given to ministers power to bind and loose, to open and shut; and that the office of loosing consisteth in this point, that the minister should either offer by the preaching of the Gospel the merits of Christ and full pardon to such as have lowly and contrite hearts and do unfeignedly repent them, pronouncing unto the same a sure and undoubted forgiveness of their sins and hope of everlasting salvation. We say also that the minister doth execute the authority of bind-

ing and shutting as often as he shutteth up the gate of that kingdom of heaven against the unbelieving and stubborn persons, or else when he doth quite shut them out from the Church by open excommunication.'[1] He refers here to Matt. xviii. 18; but the same may be said of John xx. 23, where, as Augustine remarks, 'the dove'—that is, the whole Church—is addressed in the persons of those present on the occasion. If the Reformation were open more than it is to the censures of its own children for some deficiencies, we should still owe an incalculable debt of gratitude to Luther and his fellow-labourers for removing the veil which had been interposed between the Saviour and the sinner, and once more permitting the glory of Christ to be seen by man.[2]

[1] Jewel, 'Apology of the Church of England.'
[2] For further remarks on this subject see Appendix B.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

REGENERATION AND BAPTISM

(Pages 144–149.)

VOLUMES have been written on this subject, and the controversy seems never-ending. It is proposed at present merely to state the facts as they may be gathered from Scripture, with some inferences, leaving the reader to judge for himself whether the conclusions drawn are correct or not.

1. The word *παλιγγενεσία*, or regeneration, occurs but twice in the New Testament; once in connection with spiritual renewal (Titus iii. 5), and once to denote the new state of things which the second Advent of Christ is to introduce (Matt. xix. 28). But the equivalent terms are of frequent occurrence. The usual synonym is the figurative expression 'new birth.' Thus to Nicodemus our Lord declared that no one unless born again (or from above) can enter the kingdom of God; and as to the Author of this change, it is referred to the Holy Spirit, as distinguished from moral changes which are within the powers of human nature. The distinction between 'born of the flesh' and being 'born of the spirit' is not one of degree but of kind. The natural man, however adorned with moral graces,

is of the flesh; the spiritual man is born from heaven (ἄνωθεν, John iii. 3–6). And if we ask what is meant by the new birth or being in Christ (for they are equivalent terms), the Apostle Paul shall answer: 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (or creation); old things are passed away, behold all things'—affections, aims, hopes, as well as ecclesiastical standing—'are become new' (2 Cor. v. 17). It is compared to a resurrection from the dead: 'You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins' (Eph. ii. 1). By another Apostle we are told that 'he that is born of God doth not commit sin' (1 John iii. 9); not, of course, that he is without sin, but that the principle of the new birth is in itself antagonistic to wilful and habitual continuance in sin. 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh' (Gal. v. 17); a conflict is going on which can only end in victory on one side or the other; and so far as the Spirit prevails, sin is not committed. Further, Christians, because of their being born from above, are described as 'children of God;' and the term in Scripture signifies similarity of disposition as well as a new relation. Thus children of Belial are persons of evil disposition; and Zacchæus, who by his natural birth was a Jew already, became, on his conversion, 'a son of Abraham' (Luke xix. 9), that is, like Abraham in faith and newness of life. The Jew, by natural birth, had covenanted access to God through an earthly priesthood; Christians, as sons or children of God, are led by the Spirit of God, and by the same Spirit cry Abba, Father (Rom. viii. 14–16); expressions inconsistent with the supposition that they may be under the dominion of sin. In fact, the terms regeneration, new birth, being in Christ, &c., are always

connected with spiritual renovation, whatever else they may imply; and nothing can be more repugnant to Scripture than to suppose that a man may be a child of God and a child of the devil at one and the same time. The primary instrument of regeneration is, according to Scripture, the Word of God. To this effect are such passages as the following: 'Of His own will begat He us with the Word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures' (James i. 18); 'Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever' (1 Peter i. 23). By the last-cited Apostle the Word is said to be an instrument, not only of regeneration, but also of nourishing and advancing the new life imparted: 'As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby' (1 Peter ii. 2). So St. Paul to the Ephesian elders: 'I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified' (Acts xx. 32). The same follows indirectly from passages in which faith is described as an instrument, or rather essential constituent, of regeneration, 'Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus' (Gal. iii. 26): for faith and the Word are correlative terms; 'How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher?' (Rom. x. 14). 'As many as received Him,' acknowledged His claims and accepted His invitations, 'to them He gave the right (or privilege) to become the sons of God' (John i. 12). 'While Peter yet spake these words (antecedently to baptism), the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word' (Acts x. 44). 'When the

Gentiles heard Paul and Barnabas, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord, and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed' (Acts xiii. 48). Lydia believed with her house; but if so, it was because 'the Lord opened her heart that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul' (Acts xvi. 14). Regeneration is also connected in Scripture with baptism, though not so directly, as an instrument, as it is with the Word: 'Unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God' (John iii. 5); different interpretations have been given to this passage, but let it be assumed that by 'water' our Lord means Christian baptism, 'We are buried with Him by baptism into His death,' that is, in the likeness of His death, and 'are raised in the likeness of His resurrection' (Rom. vi. 4–6; Col. ii. 12). 'As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ' (Gal. iii. 27). It is possible that by the 'washing of regeneration' (Titus iii. 5) St. Paul means baptism. 'By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body' (1 Cor. xii. 13); it is a question whether in this passage 'baptized' is to be taken literally or figuratively; especially in view of our Lord's marked distinction between water-baptism and the baptism of the Spirit (Acts i. 5), but let it be taken literally. Ananias directs Saul to 'arise and be baptized and wash away his sins,' and regeneration always implies forgiveness of sins. It is to be observed, however, that none of these passages so distinctly express the filial relation to God implied in regeneration as those do which connect the Word with this latter. For example, 'As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ,' is not equivalent to the preceding verse, 'Ye are all the chil-

dren of God by faith in Christ Jesus;' and the same may be said of 'being buried by baptism' into the likeness of Christ's death and resurrection, and even 'be baptized and wash away thy sins.'

Such, mostly in the words of Scripture itself, is what we learn on the subject from the sacred volume. Some inferences may be drawn from it. Regeneration, then, is not a mere relative change of federal condition, as when a baptized person is supposed, by regenerative grace, to be brought externally into covenant with God, and to acquire a new ecclesiastical standing, without any necessary corresponding newness of heart and life. Nor is it a mere admission to a state of privilege, such as any one born in a Christian country and dedicated to God in infancy enjoys. The possession of privileges is compatible with actual moral depravity. The Jew by his birth was a privileged person; but St. Paul tells us, 'He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly' (Rom. ii. 28–29). A regenerate person has *used* as well as possessed his privileges. Nor, again, is it merely a liberation of the will, supposed to be effected by baptism, by virtue of which the will is now enabled to choose whether it will serve God or not. This was a common notion with some of the Fathers and the Schoolmen. The will was previously enslaved by the powers of evil; now it is set at liberty to act in one direction or the other. The will is not positively biassed in favour of religion by regenerating grace, but merely released from its bondage as a faculty of choosing. It may decide not to serve God, and yet the subject is regenerate because he has received a power somewhat similar to that which

Adam possessed before the fall, 'eat of the tree and die, abstain and live.' Adam's will before the fall was in perfect harmony with the will of God, but as a mere faculty it was free. In short, regeneration is not a mere capacity for spiritual renewal, by which the man, if he is not wanting to himself, may attain such renewal, but actual goodness, whether it be regarded as a germ or seed (1 John iii. 9) or in its maturer growth. The seed itself is spiritual renewal. This mere capacity for holiness is sometimes disguised under the expressions, incorporation into the Second Adam in His humanity, a grafting of our nature into that of Christ, the communication of Christ's glorified humanity, and the like. 'As original sin,' we are told, 'is the partaking of Adam's nature, so regeneration is the partaking of Christ's.'[1]

What the grafting of our nature into that of Christ (that is, His humanity) may mean is not easy to discover; but if what is intended is, that in regeneration a capacity of attaining goodness is conveyed, but not actual spiritual renewal, or, as it is sometimes called, conversion, the description falls short of the Scripture notion. Closely connected with this theory, indeed the same in another shape, is the following: 'It' (regeneration) 'is, I say, a new birth, or the giving of a new nature. Now let it be observed there is nothing impossible in the thing itself (though we do not believe it is so), but nothing impossible in the very notion of a regeneration being accorded even to impenitent sinners. I do not say regeneration in its fulness, for that includes in it perfect happiness and holiness, to which it tends from the first, yet regeneration in a sufficient sense in

[1] Sadler, 'Second Adam,' &c., cc. 2–3.

its primary qualities. For the essence of regeneration is the communication of a higher or diviner nature; and sinners may have this gift, though it be a curse to them and not a blessing. The devils have a nature thus higher and more divine than man, and yet they are not thereby preserved from evil.'[1] It is difficult to understand how regeneration in its fulness can include holiness, and yet in its essence be merely a new nature analogous to that of Satan. Surely, as the tree is, so is its root or nature.

Once more, regeneration is, according to Scripture, more than a mystical grace, neutral in character, distinct from the qualifications required from adults for baptism, and also from the process of sanctification which ought to follow; a something intermediate between the two. By Bishop Bethell this grace, to which alone he will allow the term regeneration, is variously described: it is 'the principle of a new life,' 'a special gift of the Spirit,' 'an initiatory gift or earnest of the Spirit,' 'the covenanted consignation of the Holy Ghost,' 'the infused virtue of the Holy Ghost,' 'a potential faculty of renovation,' and the like.[2] Only with conversion, as implying the quickening of the dead soul by the Word of life and subsequent sanctification, it has no necessary connection. It is, we are told, 'a change which the Church has ever carefully distinguished from conversion, the renewal of the inward frame, and every other change, moral, spiritual, and miraculous.'[3] That is, it is in substance a mere capacity for attaining goodness. We cannot help being struck with the affinity of this notion to the 'impressed character' of Romanism. Three Sacraments—baptism, confirmation, and orders—

[1] Newman, Sermons, vol. iii. Sermon 16. [2] Bapt. Reg., c. iv. [3] Ibid

according to the doctrine of Rome, impress a character or stamp on the soul which is never obliterated, whence the rule that baptism cannot be twice administered. But this character is distinct from personal holiness. It is not *gratia gratum faciens*, but *gratia gratis data*, a gift which simply determines a man's position in the Church. The fictus in baptism receives it equally with the repentant believer, a morally vicious priest equally with the most pious. Let it be considered whether the following language does not approach too nearly to the doctrine of Trent and its Catechism: 'The Apostle describes baptism' (with which alone the Bishop connects regeneration) 'as a ceremony in which we are sealed and stamped with the Spirit, and have, as it were, a mark set on us inwardly in the soul as God's peculiar property, in the same manner that the Jews under the carnal and typical dispensation were sealed and marked as God's peculiar property outwardly in the flesh.[1]

We turn now to our Articles to see what they say on the subject. Article XVII. contains no allusion to baptism, but it is very express on the point of regeneration. 'Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God' (election) 'are called by God's Spirit working in due season; they through grace obey the calling; they be justified freely; *they be made sons of God by adoption*; they be made like the image of His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works; and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.' Into the question of the Divine decrees and their compatibility with human freedom it is not necessary to enter; but

[1] Bapt. Reg., c. iv.

who are the sons of God, and how they are made, is plainly stated. They are called by the preaching of the Gospel and the secret work of the Holy Spirit accompanying it; they obey the Divine call, as Lydia attended to the things spoken by Paul, the Lord opening her heart to do so; they are justified freely by faith, as she was; they are by sanctifying grace transformed into the image of His Son; they walk in good works; and at length attain the end of their faith, salvation. It is implied throughout that before this radical change they were neither sons of God in the full Scriptural sense ('they be' *then* 'made sons of God'), nor justified, nor members of Christ, nor inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. In Article XXVII. (of Baptism) there is nothing at variance with this description: 'Baptism' (that is, baptism in general without reference to particular cases of it) 'is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God.' Such, according to our Church, is the office of baptism. It is not only an outward sign or *tessera* by which Christians are distinguished from Jews and heathens, but an instrument of grafting visibly into the Church; it is a sign of regeneration, which, therefore, in its unseen essence, is supposed to be in existence beforehand; the promises of God, especially of forgiveness of sin, the same as are conveyed by the Word, are sealed by

an additional and visible instrument; faith is thus strengthened and grace increased by virtue of prayer. The subscriber to Article XVII. in its most literal sense can find nothing in these statements inconsistent with it. To a Romanist theologian, indeed, they would appear seriously defective. In particular, that grace should only be increased by the Sacrament, viz., the grace that existed previously, and no grace different in kind and of a higher order conveyed, would be a stumbling-block to him. This fundamental tenet of Protestantism—that there is no special grace attached to the Sacraments, no grace which cannot be attained by any other instrument—is, to say the least, favoured by the wording of the Article. Yet others besides Romanists may think that it omits some aspects of these ordinances. It does not, for example, allude to them as symbols. The symbolism of the two appointed by Christ is instructive; by the washing with water, the necessity of forgiveness of sin and of a new heart are symbolised; by the partaking of the bread and wine, the necessity of abiding in Christ and in the efficacy of His atonement by faith is visibly impressed. Each of them is, in this respect, as Augustine expresses it, a *verbum visibile*. Moreover, the Article does not mention what may be called the distinctive feature of the Sacraments as means of grace, viz., their appropriating function. The Word addresses itself to a number of hearers, but not to any one in particular. Those who by faith appropriate the promise do, no doubt, savingly make it their own; still there is a want which the Sacrament supplies, a visible act of Christ Himself making over to the believer the blessings of salvation and certifying to the Church that he individually is

qualified to be received into her communion. For since Christ Himself appointed the Sacraments, although He makes use of the Church as His organ to administer them, it is Christ Himself who acts through them and publicly proclaims to the Church and the world that the individual in question is in vital union with Himself, that he wishes to be baptized, that Christ complies with his wish, and that the Church should no longer hesitate to obey the command of her Divine Head to receive him as a member. As Christ does not baptize Himself, but makes use of the fallible Church as His organ, mistakes will occur; the Church may baptize some whom Christ would not have baptized; but where all proper qualifications are present, baptism is nothing less than Christ's own act authenticating the previous work of grace; while the believer can say, not merely that Christ by His atonement reconciled the world to God, but that *my* sin is forgiven. This appropriating function belongs especially to the Sacraments. Whether any other spiritual gift is conveyed by baptism (the same *in kind* as that conveyed by the Word) may be matter of debate; we need not hesitate to say, in general terms, that then for the first time Christ gives Himself in the plenitude of His person and His offices publicly and formally to the believer. This is not expressed directly in the form of baptism as appointed by our Lord: 'Baptizing them into the name,' that is, the revealed nature, 'of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,' the Holy Trinity. But since the Son incarnate is the Mediator between both the Father and the Holy Ghost and man, the former as our atoning High-Priest, the latter as the Sender of the Holy Spirit, we may say that in baptism He Himself does make

Himself over to the believer. These are the uses of the Sacrament, and they sufficiently explain the language of Scripture in reference to it. It is, properly understood, a bath of regeneration; by it we are buried with Christ *in the likeness* of His death and resurrection; in it our sins are symbolically and actually washed away; it saves us so far as in it Christ certifies publicly that we are saved; in short, it may be regarded as the last step and the completion of regeneration. It supplies to us what the Apostles enjoyed, and, because they enjoyed it, did not need baptism, viz., personal communion with and instruction by Christ Himself. We may therefore adopt Hooker's words, 'We justly hold it to be the door of our actual entrance into God's house, the first *apparent* beginning of life, a seal perhaps to the grace of election,' even if we cannot go quite with him when he adds, 'to our sanctification, a step that hath not anything before it.'[1] And again, 'By baptism we receive Christ Jesus, and by the other Sacrament we receive Him also,' even if we pause at the words, 'and from Him that saving grace which is proper unto baptism, and that grace which the Eucharist properly bestoweth.'[2] Perhaps the simplest method of reconciling Scripture with Scripture is to follow out the idea suggested by the above words, 'the completion of regeneration.' It admits of an illustration from daily life. A man agrees to buy a property and pays the purchase-money: in equity he becomes the owner of the property; but if he neglects to have it conveyed to him by the legal formalities of a deed duly signed and sealed, he runs risk of inconvenience, perhaps damage. In Scripture regeneration is always associated with repentance and faith, real or presumed,

[1] 'Eccles. Pol.,' Bk. v. c. 60. [2] Ibid., c. 57.

produced by the Word as an instrument of the Spirit; to denude it, therefore, of its constituent of spiritual renewal, to distinguish it absolutely from conversion, is to lower its full meaning and set aside the plain statements of Scripture. On the other hand, it may be admitted that the process is not complete antecedently to baptism. The deed has not been signed and sealed, the marriage ring has not been placed on the finger. And if grace is held to accompany this final step, there is no reason why it should not do so, provided always that it is not a grace peculiar to the Sacrament, but an increase or confirming of grace already vouchsafed. By our older divines the terms regeneration and conversion are employed as synonymous; but baptism is, of course, presupposed.

2. When, leaving the consideration of baptism in general and its connection with regeneration, we pass to the particular case of infant baptism, difficulties, it must be confessed, meet us which have not, as yet, been satisfactorily removed. The principal one has been noticed in the text, and it is not necessary to recapitulate on the point. Scripture furnishes no positive data on which to found an article of faith on the subject. We must, therefore, avoid such rash statements as that of Martensen: 'Baptism is, according to its idea, infant baptism. The Church, in introducing infant baptism, is so far from deviating from the original institution, that she presents baptism precisely in the form which most perfectly corresponds to the idea.'[1] In which he is followed by an English commentator on Mark x. 14: 'Not only may infants be brought to Christ, but in order for us who are

[1] Dog., § 255.

mature to come to Him, we must cast away all that wherein our maturity has caused us to differ from them, and become like them.' Very true; but he continues, 'Not only is infant baptism justified, but it is (abstractedly considered, not as to the preparation for it, which, from the nature of the case, must be exceptional) the normal pattern of all baptism. In adult baptism, the exceptional case (?), we strive to secure that state of simplicity and childishness which in the infant we have ready and undoubted to our hands'[1] We would only suggest two points of difficulty. All admit that in the case of adults an obex or bar may interfere with the beneficial effects of baptism; an impenitent unbeliever receives no advantage from it. On what ground is it asserted that the original sin of an infant is not bar to baptismal grace? Original sin is described in strong terms in Article IX.: 'Owing to it, man is of his own nature inclined to evil, and it deserveth God's wrath and damnation.' Is this no bar? It is no answer to say, Baptism removes in the case of every infant the guilt of original sin; for this is in itself a benefit, and how does the benefit get over the interposing bar? Again, on what authority does the opinion rest that the comparative innocence of infants, arising solely from their physical immaturity, is equivalent to the repentance and faith, the special work of the Holy Spirit, required in adults as qualifications? We must take care, in our theories, not to approach too nearly to the Pelagian heresy. The essence of Pelagianism is the confounding of nature

[1] Alford, *in loc.* Possibly the author may mean that adult baptism is 'the exceptional case' in most Christian Churches; but is it the exceptional case of Scripture?

with grace; now the supposition that a mere physical inability to commit actual sin is the same thing as repentance and faith, and qualifies every infant for baptism, seems akin to it, if it does not pass the boundary. We are confronted too by the fact that a majority of those baptized in infancy have never, within human knowledge, exhibited in after-life those fruits of the Spirit which Scripture makes the test of a spiritual change. This is accounted for in various ways; they have failed to make use of their privileges, they have fallen from grace, &c.; but whatever be the cause, they are not, we are told, to be called unregenerate, because they were once baptized in infancy. Surely we may ask whether the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit is so feeble, so dependent on the will of man, that it allows itself to be thus frustrated, and in such a number of instances, either in beginning or in carrying on His work? 'Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came unto them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army' (Ezek. xxxvii. 9, 10).

This tacit assumption, that infant baptism is the normal case of Scripture, pervades many modern works, vitiating the conclusions drawn in them. Thus Bishop Bethell sums up the result of his inquiries into Scripture as follows: 1. 'Such a change as we call regeneration does actually take place in baptism' (to this there is no objection). 2. This is 'a mysterious collation of grace, and a passage from a carnal state in Adam to a spiritual state in Christ, carrying with it the gift of the Holy Ghost' (what gift?); 'and a covenanted and con-

ditional title to everlasting happiness' (but not the newness of heart necessary to that blessing). 3. 'Faith and repentance are necessary qualifications for baptism, wherever the subject is capable of them.' (Quite true, and Scriptural.) But he goes on, in reference to our 'Articles and Liturgy,' to assert, that 'a very plain and broad distinction is laid down in them between the grace of regeneration, and conversion, repentance, renovation, and such Christian virtues and changes of the inward frame as require the concurrence of man's will and endeavours.' As regards infants (the special point now before us) 'they (the formularies) suppose that infants, who are necessarily free from sin (original?), are duly qualified for baptism, and are looked upon by God precisely in the same sense as penitents and believers; and they unequivocally assert that every baptized infant without exception is born again.' Our Article on baptism contents itself with the modest assertion that 'the baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ.' We have searched through the Thirty-nine Articles, and can find nothing else said on the subject. As regards the Liturgy, the difference between public and devotional services and articles of faith, the former being always founded on hypothetical presumptions, is generally acknowledged. But the Bishop's statement respecting infants is noteworthy 'Every baptized infant without exception is born again,' and in the full Scripture sense of the term; and the mere physical immaturity of infants, owing to which they cannot commit actual sin, places them on a level with 'penitents and believers.' That is, in other words, the mere *opus operatum* of baptism without 'prevenient

grace' of any kind, regenerates every infant 'without exception.'[1] If, then, a native deserted infant, found in the wilds of Africa, were baptized by some traveller, who then passed on his way, that infant must be supposed regenerated. We could only ask where does Scripture, which does not mention the case of infants at all, lay down this dogma? As a pious opinion it may be entertained, but for an article of faith we require proof from Scripture. Bishop Bethell confounds the general description of baptism in Article XXVII. with the very different question, who 'receive baptism rightly.' That question may be determined by some Christians in one way, and by others in another; but the Article does not say that, infants, merely as infants, are right receivers. The Bishop's theory is founded on Waterland's sermon on regeneration, in which regeneration, especially in the case of infants, is distinguished from renewal or renovation. Of course, if all infants are regenerate in and by baptism, this distinction must be observed; for repentance, faith, and generally renewal, require man's concurrence, of which infants are incapable. But this is reasoning from the general practice of Christendom, not from the normal recorded cases of Scripture. Waterland, however, is too candid a writer to forget these recorded cases. 'So much for the difference between regeneration and renovation: let us next consider how far they agree, or how near they are allied. As one is a renewal of the spiritual state, and the other a renewal of the heart, it must follow that, so

[1] This was the point in controversy between Mr. Gorham and the Bishop of Exeter. The latter held that baptism unconditionally conveys to every infant regeneration, the former that in no case is baptism unconditional. The judgment pronounced that Mr. Gorham's opinion is not contrary to the doctrine of the Church of England.

far as a renewal of the mind is necessary to a renewal of state, so far it is *a neccssary ingredient* of the new birth, or an integral part of it. Therefore, in the case of adults, *regeneration and renovation must go together?* Again, 'Regeneration, while it *takes in* renovation to render it complete and salutary to the recipient (*and is in fact joined with it*), yet differs from renovation, as the whole differs from the part.' As long as it is thus admitted that, according to the normal case of Scripture, renovation is a necessary ingredient or part of regeneration, it may also be admitted that whatever grace is given in baptism may be regarded as the completion of the whole work. And yet Waterland apparently sees no difficulty in bringing the case of infants under the general rule of baptism, as we find it in Scripture; as if both the practice and the theory of infant baptism were as explicitly to be found in Scripture as they are in respect to that of adults.

The same remarks apply to another work, much recommended to the clergy, with the practical conclusions of which a substantial agreement exists (Sumner's 'Apostolical Preaching'). 'Another practical evil,' Dr. Sumner tells us, 'of the doctrine of special grace is the necessity which it implies of some test of God's favour, and of the reconcilement of Christians to Him, beyond and subsequent to the covenant of baptism. St. Paul, it has been seen, insists upon the necessity of regeneration. He speaks of the "old man as being corrupt according to the deceitful lusts." With equal clearness he intimates that the Christians whom he addresses' (in his Epistles) '*were* thus regenerate' (how could he do otherwise, when by the preaching of the Word they had been brought to repentance and faith and then to

baptism?) 'These addresses and exhortations are founded on the principle that the disciples, by their dedication to God in baptism, had been brought into a state of reconcilement with Him—had been admitted to privileges which the Apostle calls on them to improve.' The disciples had not only been admitted to privileges, but were supposed to have improved them; to have been, under the preaching of the Word, spiritually quickened to repentance and faith; to have experienced a prevenient work of the regenerating Holy Spirit; by their faith to have been justified, by the Spirit to have been quickened to newness of life. Were these preliminary and essential conditions of salvation of no account with God, so that their covenant with Him only commenced with their dedication to God in baptism? They may have needed the formal sign and seal, but had they not the substance? But (and this is the point in question) the respected author proceeds: 'On the authority of this example (?), and of the undeniable practice of the first ages of Christianity (?), our Church considers baptism as conveying regeneration, instructing us to pray before baptism that the infant may be born again, and to return thanks after baptism that it hath pleased God,' &c. That is, that infants as such, and all infants without exception, are on a par with repenting and believing adults, and are so regenerate in baptism that, however their lives afterwards may be 'profane and unholy (such are the author's words), they are never afterwards to be addressed as needing regeneration. 'How is the fact of regeneracy, upon which eternity depends' (he continues), 'to be discovered?' By the definite and visible act of the Church in dedicating

the infant to God in baptism, and by nothing else; not by spiritual awakening, nor by sorrow for past sin, nor by newness of life.' Such is the question and the answer.

A greater than Dr. Sumner tells us, 'By their fruits ye shall know them' (Matt. vii. 20), and His Apostles, 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts' (Gal. v. 24). We prefer these tests of regeneration to that which the pious Archbishop makes the sole one. Theories may be entertained on the difference between regeneration and renewal, and on the 'common grace' supposed *to be offered* in baptism to all, adults or infants, and the 'special grace' commonly associated with conversion, but they must not be pushed to an extreme which renders Scripture no longer our guide, to this extent at least, that 'whatsoever is not read therein nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith.'

'In no case is baptism unconditional'—that is, prevenient grace of some kind must be supposed in all cases, infants as well as adults, as necessary to a beneficial reception of the Sacrament. This principle, in opposition to the *opus operatum* doctrine of the Schoolmen and the Church of Rome, was recovered among other Scriptural truths at the Reformation, and adopted by all the Protestant Churches, our own included. But when it came to define what the prevenient grace in an infant was, difficulties were felt. Faith in an adult was a necessary qualification; but what faith could be supposed in an infant? Luther, in his perplexity, boldly at first maintained that faith,

and not merely as a habit, but as an active principle, is infused into the infant either before or at baptism; but study and reflection induced his followers to abandon such a notion. By others (the Calvinists) it was held that a seminal principle of faith was conveyed to *elect* infants, to render them fit for baptism—an opinion to which Hooker seems to incline when he speaks of baptism as a 'seal of the grace of election before received.' A common theory is that the benefit of baptism is suspended until the child is able to exercise faith and repentance, when the baptismal grace awakens from its slumber, and the whole work of regeneration becomes complete. As this last notion involves the admission that regeneration without actual faith and repentance—that is, inward renewal—is incomplete, there is no objection to its being held as a pious opinion. Our Church attempts a solution by bringing the case as nearly as it can under that of adults. It supposes, by an allowable fiction, that the faith of the sponsors and parents, or, in the last resort, of the Church itself, may be imputed to the infant, who is made to answer (through his sponsors), 'I renounce, &c., I steadfastly believe, &c., I will and, &c.' She never ventures to assert that baptism is unconditional—that is, that all infants, without exception, are, as such, regenerate in baptism. Nor does she deem baptized infants, as such, fit for the Holy Communion, as the Confirmation service testifies. What is all this but a tacit confession that infant baptism, however natural and allowable, is an imperfect baptism, and does not, in itself, come up fully to the Scripture pattern? As regards the history of infant baptism, everything points to the conclusion that it grew up

gradually, in the exercise of the discretion which, in many points, has been left to the Church.

Wall can find no allusion to it until he comes to an ambiguous passage in Irenæus, which speaks of infants being regenerated; but Irenæus wrote about A.D. 170. The judgment of Tertullian is well known, advising that baptism should be postponed until the subject was able to understand what he was doing—'Quid festinat innocens ætas,' &c. Now, the question is not whether Tertullian was right in his opinion, but whether he would have ventured to use such language if in his time it had been a ruled point that infant baptism is of Apostolic origin. In the exercise of the discretion allowed her, the Church not only baptized infants, but administered the Holy Communion to them; very extensively and for a long time in the Western Church, permanently in the Eastern. Maturer judgment led the Western Church to abandon the latter practice, while the former was retained as natural, and certainly not at variance with Scripture. We cannot plead a Divine prescription for it; it is only as a 'charitable work' that we present the child at the sacred font; but neither can we doubt that in so doing we are doing what He who received and blessed little children 'favourably receiveth.'

Such is the state of the question; and, while it does not exclude faith, hope, and charity, it renders dogmatical statements on the subject, to say the least, precarious. But further; however the question may be determined, it by no means justifies a breach of communion. Many of the earlier Anabaptists remained in the Church, and the Church allowed them to remain unmolested. The time when baptism is

to be administered is, surely, not a fundamental question, nor was it so considered in the ancient Church, as may be gathered from the common practice of persons postponing their baptism to the close of life, under the superstitious notion that it would wash away their sins, and send them with an unstained baptismal robe to the presence of their Judge. Our Church provides a baptismal service for adults as well as for infants, nor is any intimation given that it is meant only for mission-baptism. The elaborate inquiry of Wall leads him to the conclusion that, 'at what age the children of Christians should be baptized, whether in infancy or to stay till the age of reason, is not so clearly delivered' (in Scripture) 'but that it admits of a dispute that has considerable perplexities in it.'[1] The formation of a separate communion on this ground seems unwarrantable, and still more so is the assumption of modern Baptists, that pædo-baptism is no baptism, and that those who have been baptized in infancy, if they pass over to a Baptist communion, should be rebaptized.

[1] Part ii. c. 11.

APPENDIX B

THE REAL PRESENCE

(Pages 255–264)

THE whole structure of the Romish doctrine of the Mass, and of all systems which transform the Eucharist into a sacrifice with a human priesthood, rests on the supposition that Christ, as He was born of the Virgin, though now, of course, in a glorified body, is present in that Sacrament, to be offered up by the consecrating priest. For how can we conceive of a sacrifice without a victim; or what can be the office or use of a priest if he has nothing to offer? Hence the Fathers, who commenced with comparing the Christian ministry to the Levitical priesthood, were driven, in consistency, to use language which, to say the least, implies that Christ supplies the place of a victim, and gives Himself to be offered as a propitiatory sacrifice as often as the priest discharges his sacerdotal functions. To the Romanist the doctrine of a real presence of Christ in His glorified humanity is a necessity, as is candidly admitted by Bellarmine. 'The Eucharist,' he observes, 'might have been really and properly a Sacrament, even if it did not actually contain the body of Christ. What, therefore, was the reason why of neces-

sity the Eucharist must contain that body? In order that really and properly it might be offered up by us to God the Father, and so might be said to be really and properly a sacrifice' (De Miss., Lib. i. c. 22). The Lutheran, who holds the real presence as a truth of Scripture, but does not admit a human priesthood or the change of the bread and wine by consecration, holds it as a superfluity or excrescence; to the Romanist it is a matter of vital moment. If, then, Scripture furnishes no real ground for supposing that Christ in His humanity is present in the Eucharist, or any other means of grace, and if we allow Scripture alone to decide the question, the foundation, or rather *sine quâ non*, of the sacerdotal theory at once collapses.

That Christ, in some sense, is present in all ordinances of the Church follows from the promises which, before His departure, were given to His disciples: 'I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you' (John xiv. 18); 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world' (Matt. xxviii. 20); 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst' (Matt. xviii. 20). These are general promises, but must apply with peculiar emphasis when Christians assemble for public worship, and especially for the celebration of the Eucharist. A Church from which Christ were in every sense absent would be no Church, or only as a dead body is a man, an organisation from which the animating spirit has fled. The question is, In what manner have the promises been fulfilled? as fulfilled they certainly have been. Let it be observed that the expression 'real presence,' which, by the way, does not occur in our formularies, is ambi-

guous. If Christ is present at all, His presence must be a real one, and not a phantom of the imagination. But real may be predicated of spirit as well as of body, and the mere epithet 'real' does not determine which is to be understood. But our Lord Himself leaves us in no doubt on that point. 'I go,' He says, 'to prepare a place for you;' 'I go My way to Him that sent Me;' 'A little while and ye shall not see Me;' 'I leave the world, and go to the Father;' and yet, 'I will come to you,' not surely at the last day alone, but ere long. Now let the juxtaposition of this last promise with the verses immediately preceding be observed: 'I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you; discharging the same offices of Instructor and Comforter as I have done towards you—in a word, My Vicar on earth (John xiv. 16–18). Judas, in his perplexity, asked, 'Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to us, and not unto the world?' Let us again mark the juxtaposition of the answer: 'These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you; but the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (verses 23–26). Christ, then, announces His impending absence and yet His continual presence; how shall we reconcile the discrepancy? The doctrine of the Holy Trinity removes the difficulty. As the incarnate Son, He was about to depart until His Second Advent, but as the Holy Spirit the disciples should

enjoy His presence to the end of time. Is, then, the second Person and the third Person one and the same? No, as regards the *modi existendi* in the Godhead; but yes, as regards the Godhead itself, in which the Divine Personality resides; because though the *modi existendi* are three, the Godhead is but one, as is acknowledged both by Jews and Christians. As God, then, where Christ is, there is the Holy Ghost; and where the Holy Ghost is, there is Christ. If we say that the Holy Ghost is the Vicar, and the only one, of Christ on earth, yet since the Vicar is Divine, and the Principal Divine also, they are the same in so far as there is but one God. This is the meaning of the ancient Canon, 'Opera Trinitatis ad extra indivisa sunt;' that is, in all works outside itself, the whole Trinity takes a part. Such a work was creation, which is indiscriminately assigned to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And the indwelling of God in the Church is a similar work, *ad extra*. It is in operations *ad intra*, in the eternal relations of the three Persons, that the distinctions of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost properly reside. Not that the offices of the Godhead in the work of redemption are one and the same, which would be to 'confound the Persons.' The Father creates (or rather elects), the Son redeems, the Holy Ghost sanctifies; whence the aforesaid Canon adds, 'Salvo tamen earum (Personarum) ordine et discrimine.' But it still remains that it is the one God who is operative, and where one Person acts all act. Hence our Lord could, with perfect consistency, say that He was about to depart from His Church, and yet that He would ever be with His Church; really absent and yet really present; absent as the Incarnate Son, present in and by His

Divine Vicar the Holy Ghost. It is through the indwelling of this Divine Vicar that Christ is in Christians, and they in Him (John xvii. 23); holds inward fellowship with them (Rev. iii. 20); dwells in their hearts by faith; is in them the hope of glory, &c. Not that Christ in His glorified humanity takes up His abode in us, which, if that humanity is not a phantom but a reality, is inconceivable, but that the Comforter, Who takes His place, and Who is, in fact, Christ as regards the Godhead, discharges these gracious offices. Thus in this, as in other instances, the doctrine of the Trinity supplies the key to the meaning of passages which otherwise seem not easy to reconcile; a proof of this doctrine analogous to that on which the law of gravitation rests, viz., that the Newtonian hypothesis, and it alone, has been found adequate to explain the motions of the heavenly bodies, even such as on their first discovery may have appeared exceptions to it. To our faith Christ must ever be present, whether in the Eucharist or out of it; His atonement on the Cross, never to be repeated, is the foundation of our hope; His intercession before the throne (His present sacerdotal office) is our warrant for drawing nigh to the mercy-seat; and especially must He be present to us in view of the work of the Holy Ghost: for the great gift of the Comforter was the fruit of His Cross and passion, and we are told that this Comforter never acts independently of Christ: 'When the Comforter is come Whom I will send unto you from the Father, He shall testify of Me. . . . He will guide you into all truth, for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me, for

He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you' (John xv. 26; xvi. 13, 14).

This much on the general question of Christ's presence in the Church; we pass on to that of His real presence in the Eucharist. The institution of this Sacrament is delivered to us by three of the Evangelists, and once by St. Paul as received by him by direct revelation. This circumstance renders his account of it the most authoritative of all, and St. Luke's is evidently derived from it. It is as follows: 'I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks He brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come' (1 Cor. xi. 23–26). Two things are to be noted in this account; the first, that the words 'in remembrance of Me,' are by St. Paul twice repeated, after the delivery of the bread and after that of the cup, while St. Luke omits them after the latter, which seems to prove the importance which the Apostle attaches to them. And do they not lead to the conclusion that in his mind there is no bodily presence of Christ in the Eucharist? for the remembrance of a person is inconsistent with the notion of his being present. The second thing is, his explicit explanation of the meaning and object of the Sacrament, 'therein ye do shew the Lord's death till He come.' That

is, the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, and the atonement for sin thereby effected, are what in this ordinance you proclaim to the world as the foundation of your hope of salvation. Not the incarnation, however necessary it might be to that sacrifice and atonement, not a sacramental reception of a sacramental body, but the fact that He died for your sins; you make a public confession that you glory in that death, which to the Jews is a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness. Such is St. Paul's exposition of this ordinance. But we must consider the words of institution more at length.

'Take, eat, this is My body; drink of this cup, this is My blood.' Nothing is more common than to cite these words as if they contained all that our Lord said on the occasion. In fact, He adds to both commands words of the highest significance, and without which we have not the full form of institution. He says, 'This is My body, which is given, or broken, for you; this is My blood, which is shed for you' (St. Luke, St. Mark). The R.V. omits the word 'broken' (1 Cor. xi. 24), though it can plead good MSS. in its favour; but this makes no difference to the sense. Τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν is equivalent to τὸ διδόμενον or κλώμενον ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν; it is a short mode of expressing a propitiatory sacrifice, like περὶ ἁμαρτίας in Heb. x. 6. Now it is to be observed that the words 'which is given,' and 'which is shed,' are not introduced by a relative and verb, ὅ ἐστι, as if they were additional and independent clauses, but by the article and participle, τὸ σῶμα τὸ διδόμενον, τὸ αἷμα τὸ ἐκχυνόμενον, in which construction the participles acquire a defining and limiting power. The meaning is: This bread is (repre-

sents or signifies) that body of Mine which is, or is about to be, given for you; this cup that blood of Mine which is about to be shed for you; and it may be supposed, without seeming to extort a sense, that the words refer, not to another body, but another stage of humanity not at the time existing. And, in fact, Christ, as regards His human nature, did pass through a twofold condition of it, though personal identity was preserved, the state of His humiliation (*status exinanitionis*) and the state of His exaltation (*status gloriæ*).[1] And the transition from the one state to the other did not take place according to the course of nature, as when the humanity of a child passes into that of manhood or old age; it was such as required the miracle of the resurrection to effect it, such a miracle as that by which the bodies of the saints will be raised, and they who shall be found alive at the second coming changed (1 Cor. xv. 51). Personal identity will be preserved, but the body which was 'sown in corruption' shall be 'raised in incorruption, sown in dishonour raised in glory, sown a natural body raised a spiritual.' So it was with Christ Himself, the first-fruits from the dead. Now it was only in the first stage of His humanity that He was capable of having His body broken and His blood shed, of having the body and the blood separated from each other, the well-known cause and proof of death in the Jewish sacrifices. For

[1] This is a common division with theologians: 'Exinanitio est status Christi *θεανθρώπου* quo is, non tantum aliis hominibus in communi vivendi ratione factus est similis, sed et acerbissimam passionem et mortem humillimo obsequio sustinuit; status exaltationis Christi est quo Christus depositis infirmitatibus carnis, plenarium divinæ majestatis usum suscepit et exercuit.'—Hollaz de Pers. Christi, Quæst. 113, 134.

the ideas of suffering and death cannot be connected with Christ in His glorified humanity: 'Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more' (in this condition of His humanity); 'Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more' (Rom. vi. 9); 'He reigns in glory until all enemies are put under His feet' (1 Cor. xv. 25). We have, then, two states of Christ's humanity, one of which has passed away, the other which can never be exchanged for its predecessor.

And we have now to ask, In connection with which state is the Eucharist mentioned in Scripture? Invariably with the state of humiliation. That the words of institution, when fully cited, do so is obvious. The only other passage of importance in this connection is 1 Cor. x. 16, and it is little more than a repetition of the institution. 'The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?' here, in the twofold act of eating the bread and drinking the wine, as at the institution, that is, in the separation of the elements, the death of Christ, the separation of His body and His blood, is symbolised, and communion, or participation in the virtue of that death, is the thing signified. The future meeting of Christ and His Church, to which He alludes in the words, 'I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom' (Matt. xxvi. 29), whatever we are to understand by them, will, we may be sure, be one with which no associations of suffering and death will be connected.

Such, then, is the state of the Scripture evidence on the subject. Christ in His suffering humanity is not

now present anywhere, for that state no longer exists; Christ in His glorified humanity (His present state) is never spoken of in connection with the Eucharist; nor could He be so, for the leading ideas of the Sacrament are suffering, sacrifice, expiation, and atonement.

The conclusion, then, is that Christ, as the Incarnate Son, is in no sense present in the ordinance. What is present in it is the fact of atonement accomplished and past, and never to be repeated; future at the time of institution, but on the eve of accomplishment; of the great atonement, and the continued virtue of that atonement appropriated by faith till He comes again. It is a memorial of the fact, a special means of appropriating the virtue, a channel of grace; but Christ, in the humanity which now belongs to Him, is not to be sought in it. Where He is to be sought in that humanity is in heaven, where He is discharging sacerdotal functions as our Advocate with the Father. He cannot be present in the body of His humiliation, that is, in the Eucharist, without such a miracle as even the Romish Church has not ventured to propose, viz., the re-incarnation of the Son in that stage of His humanity.

It may be added that by many divines it has been doubted whether the glorified body of Christ has blood in it at all, referring to our Lord's words, 'A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have,' without mention of blood (Luke xxiv. 39).[1] The point may be thought a speculative one; but if there is any truth in it, it is an additional proof that the words of institution cannot be applied to Christ in His present state. 'He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation' (judgment) 'to himself—not dis-

[1] See Waterland on Eucharist.

cerning the Lord's body' (1 Cor. xi. 29); this verse has been cited in proof of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The argument seems of the same character as that founded on 'This is my body,' what follows about the sacrifice of the body being omitted. The connection must be taken into account. Abuses in the celebration of the Lord's Supper had crept into the Corinthian Church, demanding the Apostle's animadversion. He reminds the Church of what he had received; that the Sacrament is a memorial of Christ's death; 'whosoever,' then, 'shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord' (ver. 27); shall be liable to punishment (not eternal), for thinking lightly of the death of Christ. This is the meaning of not discerning the Lord's body, that is, making no distinction between the memorial of Christ's death and an ordinary banquet. It is still the sacrifice, and not the presence, of which the Apostle speaks. As to John vi. 51–63, it has never yet been shown that it refers directly to the Eucharist. Most modern commentators of note agree with Waterland, that though it may be applied to the Sacrament, it cannot be interpreted of it. 'The words, "Except ye eat the flesh of Christ," &c., do not mean directly that you have no life without the Eucharist, but that you have no life without participating in the Lord's passion.'[1] It is not in itself likely that our Lord at so early a period of His ministry should have alluded to the Sacraments of the Church; a remark which, notwithstanding Hooker's dictum,[2] may occasion doubt whether John iii. 5 does not come under the same rule of application, not interpretation.

[1] Euch., c. vi.

[2] Ecc. Pol, B. v. c. 59.

Briefly, the leading truths of this discourse (John vi.) are the incarnation and the sacrifice of Christ. In reply to the request of the Capernaites for the bread of God which comes down from heaven, our Lord says, 'I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever;' and then, in a still stronger figure, 'The bread that I will give is My flesh,' there is the incarnation, 'which I will give for the life of the world,' there is the atonement. And, as if to increase the perplexity of His hearers, He adds, 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you,' an idea most repugnant to the Jewish mind. To interpret this directly of the Eucharist would make Him say, Unless a man partakes of this Sacrament he has no life in him; and further, 'Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life,' every one who partakes of the Sacrament is thereby saved. Well might He explain to the murmuring disciples, 'Doth this offend you? the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life' (vers. 61–63). There is a gradation of thought in the passage. The Son becomes incarnate (σάρξ καὶ αἷμα), and then in that human nature gives Himself, in some unexplained way, for the life of the world. Our Lord was preparing the way for further revelations, and He could, at the time, do no more, for the atoning sacrifice had not yet been offered. Yet the terms used do connect the discourse with the Eucharist, for in that Sacrament the very same truths, the incarnation and the atonement, are declared, though more explicitly: 'Take, eat; this is My body; drink, this is My blood; My body given for you, My blood shed for you;' and especially in the

words, 'for the remission of sins.' The ideas that lie at the foundation of John vi. are the same as those contained in the Eucharist; only the progress of revelation is visible in the latter. The presence of Christ in His glorified body, or a quasi-physical incorporation into that humanity, are ideas foreign to both. But let us hear Waterland: 'There is one construction (of John vi.) which will completely answer in point of universality, and it is this: All that shall share in the death, passion, and atonement of Christ are safe, and all that have not a part in it are lost. All that are saved owe their salvation to the salutary passion of Christ, and their partaking thereof (which is feeding on His body and His blood) is their life. Our Lord's general doctrine in this chapter seems to abstract from all particularities and to resolve into this: that whether with faith or without' (explicit faith he must mean), 'whether in the Sacraments or out of the Sacraments, whether before Christ or since, whether in covenant or out of covenant, whether here or hereafter—no man ever was, is, or will be, accepted but in and through the grand propitiation made by the blood of Christ.'[1] That this is the true meaning few will doubt; the only point in which the learned writer may seem at fault being in introducing into the earlier discourse what it needed the fuller revelation of Christ in the institution of the Sacrament and of the Apostles after the descent of the Holy Ghost to disclose.

But we must examine the words of institution by themselves and more particularly. That they contain a tropological or figurative element, all probably will admit, though differences may exist as to its extent. The bread which Christ distributed to the disciples

[1] Euch., c. vi.

cannot literally be supposed to be His body, nor the wine His blood. Further, our Lord's death was not literally caused by the giving or breaking of His body ('A bone of Him shall not be broken'), or by the shedding of His blood. The piercing of His side by the spear was not the cause of His death, since He was actually dead before that occurred. Why then did He, to this extent at any rate, use figurative language? The answer is, because He wished to connect the Eucharist directly with the Paschal feast which they had just been celebrating, and therefore describes His approaching death in terms drawn from the sacrifice of the lamb at that feast. He identifies not only His death, but the manner of His death, with that of the lamb. He could not do this literally, but symbolically He could, and did so. The lamb was put to death by the separation of the blood from the body, as in all the Jewish sacrifices; hence our Lord delivers the Eucharist under two distinct symbols, of different character, bread and wine, His body and His blood. Now let us ask what the body and the blood of the lamb became after its death. Each of these constituents of the animal's material frame was reduced to a mass of dead matter, without any living principle. The body of the lamb was eaten, and no part of it was to remain till the next day, for in that climate it would turn to corruption. The blood, separated from the body, also became a mass of dead matter; it was no longer living blood circulating in the veins (*sanguis*), but gore (*cruor*), and liable to corruption. Put these masses of dead matter in conjunction, and the result will not be the living lamb, but simply two masses of matter. In the same way, by our Lord's death, His body, the material

organisation of flesh, sinews, bones, &c., was reduced to a mass of matter without a soul or living principle; by the same death His blood, though it was not abstracted from the body as in the case of the paschal lamb, was reduced to a mass of dead matter. Now, if we join these two dead masses of matter, still we shall not have a living Christ, for by His death His soul went to Hades during the three days before His resurrection.

The mere words of institution, then, evidently derived from the paschal sacrifice, do not present to us a living Christ. The difficulty was felt from an early date, and an attempt was made to remove it by the doctrine of concomitance. This doctrine is thus stated in the Romish formularies: 'This has been always the faith in the Church, that immediately after consecration the true body and blood of our Lord, under the species of the bread and the wine, *along with His soul*, is present; the latter by force of the natural connection and concomitance by which the parts of Christ, *who now has risen from the dead*, no more to die, are joined together. If any one shall deny that in the most Holy Sacrament the body and blood of Christ, *along with His soul* and divinity, is present, let him be anathema.'[1] Again, 'To the body the blood, *soul*, and divinity are joined, not indeed by force of consecration, but as things which are joined to the body. And they are said to be in the Sacrament by force of concomitance; for if any two things are in fact joined together, where one is, the other also of necessity is.' Now the doctrine of concomitance, as applied to the divinity of Christ, has its place, for the deity never departed from the dead body of Christ as it lay in the tomb. According to the best philosophy, the Divine

[1] Conc. Trid., Sess. xiii. can. 1.

omnipresence may be predicated of everything. God's Presence sustains every tree, stone, animal, and particle of matter in the universe; 'by Him all things consist' (Col. i. 17), or are held together in their organisation.[1] But it does not apply to the union of body and soul in men or animals (if they have a soul); for in that case they could never die. The very meaning of death is the departure of the soul from its material tabernacle; and it neither abides in that tabernacle nor returns to it by virtue of concomitance; it required a special miracle to bring it back. The body and blood of Christ in the tomb did once more become living things; but it was owing to the miracle of the resurrection, by which the soul of Christ was brought back from Hades, that they did so, and it will be owing to a similar miracle that the dead bodies of the saints will once more become living ones. Christ was again a living Christ when He rose from the dead, and not before. The Council, therefore, was compelled to refer the words of institution to Christ in His glorified body, and then its assertions hold good. For Christ, being raised, that is, with His soul returned from Hades, dies no more; and therefore body, soul, and divinity never can be again separated. Concomitance can be fully applied to Him in His present condition. But the Eucharist is the very sacrament of His death, not of His resurrection; as St. Paul tells us, 'therein,' emphatically, 'we shew the Lord's death;' and the body and blood mentioned in the words of institution are things, not a person; this is

[1] It is true that the hypostatical union is more than the abstract Divine Omnipresence, and perhaps owing to it our Lord's body in the tomb did not experience even the commencement of corruption,

My body in the state of death, this is My blood in the state of death; the soul is presumed to have gone to Hades, only to revisit the body and the blood by a special act of Divine power: 'Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption' (Ps. xvi. 10). Then indeed the Saviour reappeared in the power of an endless life, but what we commemorate in the Eucharist is not His priestly advocacy before the throne, but His death. This renders it unnecessary, or immaterial, to enter at length into the questions of tropology, as whether the figure is, with Zwingli, to be applied to the word 'is,' in the sense of signifies, or, with Œcolampadius to the words 'my body,' in the sense of a symbol or image of My body; or to attempt to describe a body which is neither 'a natural' body, as Christ's in heaven, nor a purely spiritual presence, but something between the two, viz., a sacramental body, which is only saying that it is produced in the Sacrament by the words of consecration. This, we know, is what is said and meant, but it throws no light on the nature of the body in which Christ is supposed to be present. It appears, then, that in the words of institution we have no living Christ at all, though we have the benefits of His death and passion standing to our account in undying efficacy, in that and every other ordinance of the Gospel. And so we are brought back to what we started from, that no passage can be found in Scripture which connects the Eucharist with Christ in His glorified, that is, His present, humanity.

'Feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving' (Com. Serv.). How can faith feed on any body, dead or living, natural or sacramental? It is

a figure, but one which fully describes the Christian's intercourse with Christ, a spiritual intercourse which needs no bodily presence. By faith we feed on His atonement, sufficient and once for all; on His advocacy for us as our High Priest; on His person as God and Man; on His promises, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, I will do it;' on His return to gather in His elect. The Eucharist visibly seals these spiritual blessings to the believer; but they are only such as he also receives through the Word, though the manner of conveyance is different. Even if Christ were bodily present in the Sacrament, what more could we receive? Does it convey forgiveness of sins? No; the very term Eucharist—thanksgiving—implies that the worthy recipient draws nigh with his sins already forgiven through his faith; he comes to return thanks for the gift, not to obtain it. The worshippers are supposed to be real believers, in covenant with God, pardoned and accepted; but, at the same time, to be sensible of those daily imperfections which every Christian must confess and deplore. They are assured in our service, after confession and repentance, by various 'comfortable words' of Scripture, of complete forgiveness. With the minister, they are exhorted to give thanks to God for this Gospel, to which they reply that it is meet and right so to do. They come, then, as forgiven and reconciled children of God—'*Sancta sanctis*,' as the deacon in the ancient Church exclaimed when the celebration commenced. Although the object of Bellarmine on this point is to prove the necessity of another Sacrament, that of penance, as a preparation for the Eucharist, his arguments on the nature of the Eucharist itself are unanswer-

able. Baptism and penance, he observes, are chiefly connected with remission of sin, as the symbols teach. The water in baptism signifies the cleansing of the soul from guilt; the form in penance, *absolvo te*, though not in its nature material like water, 'operates as a kind of plaster, inferior to baptism in that it does not completely purge the past, but, as it were, heals the sores and covers the scars of post-baptismal sin; whereàs the symbol of the Eucharist is nutrition and growth, and these presuppose a healthy state of the spiritual organs.' The same acute controversialist, in answer to Chemnitz urging the expression, 'for the remission of sins' in the words of institution, remarks very properly that it belongs not to the receiving of the elements, but to the body given and the blood shed; it was by these that remission was procured, not by our personal reception of the Sacrament. If, he continues, remission of sin is in any sense conveyed in the Eucharist, it can only be as food expels bodily disease, viz., by strengthening the vital organs. The suffrage of an adversary, when he is on the side of truth, is valuable. The Eucharist therefore does not convey, but presupposes forgiveness of sin; and yet there is no ordinance of the Gospel which so directly refers to the gift. It is the special Sacrament of the atoning blood of Christ. Again we can endorse Bellarmine: 'If the Eucharist is said to be the new testament because it is a sign of the will of the Testator, there remains no difficulty; for, because it is a sign and representation of the death of Christ, it is also a sign of the will of the Testator, and of all the benefits promised to us; and so also a sign of the remission of sins, so far as through it is represented

the shedding of the blood of the Lord, on account of which all sins are remitted.'[1] Exactly so; it is not a channel through which remission is conveyed, but a representation of the fact of atonement which renders remission possible. It is to be regretted that Waterland lends his authority to this notion of the Eucharist's being such a channel. After enumerating several benefits which it conveys, he concludes: 'Among these is implied, though not directly expressed by our Lord in that discourse (John vi.), remission of sins.'[2] The fact is, this valuable writer approximates to the Romish doctrine of the increase of justification. 'The true answer' (to the objection that the worthy communicant comes to the table already pardoned) 'is that the grace of remission or justification is progressive, and may be always improving.'[3] He seems not to have fully grasped the import of the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith, and of its incompatibility with sacramental justification; and, like some other modern writers, to have been unable to understand how post-baptismal sin, especially of a grave nature, is to be remitted without the intervention of the Church, sacramental and sacerdotal. As a minister of our Church, he could recognise no sacrament like that of penance for this purpose, and therefore was tempted to invest the Eucharist with the office.

For the Protestant of the Reformed (or Swiss) type, as distinguished from the Lutheran, the question of the *manducatio oralis* can hardly arise. If by that expression is meant the feeding on the natural body of Christ, which was born of the Virgin and hung on

[1] De Euch., Lib. iv., cc. 18 and 19. [2] Euch., c. 9.
[3] Euch., c. ix.

the Cross (now a glorified one), neither worthy nor unworthy communicants partake of it, for it is not present at all; if it is the body and blood which we feed on by faith, it is self-evident that none but believers partake of it. It has been urged, indeed, that the employment by our Lord of such unusual language in the discourse John vi. points to some great mystery intended to be conveyed by it; something far deeper and more sublime than the incarnation and the atonement, which are comparatively simple doctrines, and could be expounded in simple and intelligible language.[1] We are far from denying the miraculous element of Christianity, only where it is not needed we doubt whether it is to be found. 'Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus.' To enjoy the benefits of the Eucharist, it is not necessary that any mysterious miracle should be wrought at the celebration. All that the Christian needs can be supplied by a spiritual presence (Christ in and through the Holy Ghost) and the virtue of the atonement appropriated by faith. The incarnation, though it is expressed in simple language, is a mystery which has never yet been fully fathomed. The same may be said of the atonement; they are revealed mysteries, and we receive them as such; we can see that they were necessary to our salvation, though they baffle our comprehension. But a bodily presence of Christ, sacramental or other, produced by sacerdotal consecration, and wrought over and over again, has no such claim to our faith; for Scripture, properly understood, does not declare it, and we do not see the need of it. That, because we

[1] Bishop H. Browne, Art. XXVIII.

are body as well as soul, we need to feed on Christ in His humanity, in order that our bodies may be gradually prepared for the resurrection, is a fancy not unfrequently met with in the Fathers, and which for a time was adopted by Luther himself; but we read in Rom. viii. 11, 'If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by (or because of) His Spirit that dwelleth in you.'

One word on the ubiquity of Christ, insisted on by Luther, to remove the difficulty of supposing the glorified yet real body of Christ to be present in many places at once. That Christ as God is omnipresent all must admit; but the general remark may be made that the abstract attributes of Deity belong rather to the tepic of natural theism than to that of the economical Trinity, the Trinity of redemption. In other words, we cannot speak of the presence of Christ in the Church without bearing in mind that He is God manifest in the flesh (that is, under a veil more or less); that He humbled Himself so as to become obedient unto death; that He ascended in a proper humanity—facts which render the problem of His ubiquity by no means so simple as at first sight might appear. Such arguments as those of Luther in the Sacramentarian controversy, that since God is omnipresent, and the human nature in Christ never can be conceived of apart from the Divine, therefore the latter must be omnipresent; or that since Christ is at the right hand of God, and the right hand of God is everywhere, Christ is everywhere, are far from conclusive. Can a real human nature which could be touched and handled (Luke xxiv. 39) be ubiquitous? Can even a

glorified body be independent of space? Can that be a body which can neither be seen nor touched? What conception can we form of an illocal presence? or even of a presence not abstractedly ubiquitous, but, by virtue of the *communicatio idiomatum*, capable of being at will in several places at once? (Chemnitz).[1] Our present experience is against all such conceptions. The 'natural' body of Christ, it is admitted even by Romanists, is in heaven; if it is present in the Eucharist, it is so as regards 'the substance.' But substance is a mere category, an abstraction, never existing by itself, but always in the concrete. The substance of a man is in no proper sense a man. Of these difficulties the maintainers of the bodily presence of Christ in the Sacrament, in His glorified humanity, seem conscious, for it is chiefly by negatives that they define it. It is not natural, it is not local, it is not an object of sense, it is not ubiquitous as God is. It is sacramental, which, as was previously observed, is merely saying it is effected by the Sacrament, and gives us no idea of the *nature* of the body. The Romish Church can dispense with all these speculations, since, by the miracle of transubstantiation, the presence is secured at each celebration. Hence Bellarmine can and does contend against the essential ubiquity of Christ's humanity as strongly as Zwingli or Œcolampadius. 'We see,' he says,' that ubiquity is not maintained for its own sake, but because the Lutherans have nothing to reply when they are asked how the body of Christ becomes present in the Eucharist if consecration is rejected.'[2] If, as we hold,

[1] Multivolipresence, as this writer expressed it.
[2] De Euch., Lib. iii. c. 17.

Christ in His glorified humanity is not present at all in that ordinance, the speculations are superfluous.

Where true views are entertained of the office and work of the Holy Spirit in this dispensation; that to Him belong the functions of teaching, quickening, sanctifying, conferring of gifts, and generally of *applying* Christ's work to individuals—in other words, the taking of Christ's place in His absence—such expressions as 'the life of Christ' imparted to us, as an efflux from His glorified humanity, in the Eucharist or elsewhere, may be spared. It is here that even Calvin's doctrine, who holds that, though Christ is absent, an emanation of His body and blood passes from heaven to the worthy communicant, is unsatisfactory, and in fact loses itself in mysticism. Such statements are difficult to understand, and they savour of physical conceptions. Nor are they needed. What more do we need than the great promise, 'He' (the Comforter) 'dwelleth with you, and shall be in you'? In and through Him we have Christ with us; we have a most real presence of Him in the Communion, but not in the bread and wine; and we have, further, the consolatory assurance that, though absent, Christ is actively engaged in our behalf, in that He ever liveth to make intercession for us.

'Christ's body,' Bishop H. Browne tells us, 'is now glorified, but still it is the same body, though in a glorified condition.' It is, no doubt, the same body as far as personal identity is concerned, but St. Paul tells us that, *because* it is a glorified body, it is very far from being the same as was laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea: 'Sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body.' 'It is not denied,' he continues, 'that we

receive that body really, substantially, corporally; for although the word corporally seems opposed to spiritually, it is not so of necessity. When we come to explain ourselves, we may say that, though it be Christ's very body we receive in the Eucharist, and though we cannot deny even the word corporal concerning it, yet as Christ's body is now a spiritual one, so we expect a spiritual presence of that body.'[1] Christ's body after the resurrection was a spiritual one, yet it had flesh and bones, and was apprehensible by the senses. 'Certainly it is true,' the Bishop continues, 'that the faithful Christian lives by union to the glorified Divine humanity of his Lord.' That the faithful Christian lives by union with Christ is unquestionable, but why is 'the humanity' particularly insisted on? The Rubric in the Communion for the Sick gives better instruction. 'If a man . . . do not receive the sacrament of Christ's body and blood, the curate shall instruct him that if he do truly repent him of his sins, and steadfastly believe that Jesus Christ hath suffered death upon the Cross for him, and shed His blood for his redemption, earnestly remembering the benefits he hath thereby, and giving Him hearty thanks therefore, he doth eat and drink the body and blood of our Saviour profitably to his soul's health, although he do not receive the sacrament with his mouth.'

[1] What body? Does 'a spiritual presence' mean that it is not a tangible body, occupying space?

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